

RED BOOK Magazine

VOLUME FORTY-SIX
NUMBER ONE

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Owen
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in the
DECEMBER
issue



From a drawing by James Montgomery Flagg

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Notification regarding change of subscriber's address must reach us four weeks in advance of the next day of issue.

ADVERTISING FORMS close on the 3rd of the second preceding month (January forms close November 3rd). Advertising rates on application.

THE CONSOLIDATED MAGAZINES CORPORATION, Publisher, The Red Book Magazine, 36 So. State Street, Chicago, Ill.

CHARLES M. RICHTER
Vice-President

LOUIS ECKSTEIN
President

RALPH K. STRASSMAN
Vice-President

Office of the Advertising Director, 33 West 42nd Street, New York City, N. Y.
R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 80 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. LONDON OFFICES, 6 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W. C.
Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
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Ouch!

By M. MERCER KENDIG, A. B.

Director, Department of Education, THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

SOMEONE nearly everywhere in this bustling old world is always crying Ouch! The ouchers are those who are afraid of life's ordinary concussions. Everything hurts them—somewhere. They are that type of *genus homo* which, having no sympathy for others, are, nevertheless, constantly anxious about themselves.

There are many ways of crying Ouch, of expressing fear, of dodging and ducking and getting out from under. Complaint has a million whining voices. Shirking duty and evading responsibility as many subtle ways.

This is an Age of Disinclinations! Our hired man is disinclined to give us work for his wages. He gives us a look that sours the milk. Our money, which tradition says talks, also refuses to work. It says "good-by" to us without buying anything for us. The elephant-trousered youth of the land are too often disinclined to fulfill their educational opportunity or moral obligations. The Family is too often failing to rule either with reason or the rod. Men and women are looking for big jobs of little work.

Indeed, there is such default in nearly all departments of human service, that the responsible citizen who has accumulated anything is inclined to divest himself of his property and abandon the upkeep of what was once a fine, impressive American home. Few are inclined to serve him in its care and conduct.

What is the remedy for conditions which no thinking person dare gainsay? What shall the nation and the citizen do to turn this attitude of "I won't," to "I will?"

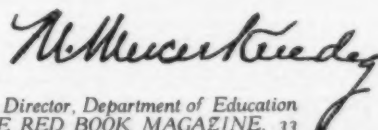
The remedy—if there is such—lies in our private school educational system and in our religious teaching in the schools, the church and the home. The untoward spirit of "I won't" is the moral prolapsis

of the hour. The young and the older citizen of every station in life must find inspiration in a new moral integrity.

It is the teaching of this new moral integrity that is the pride of our qualified private schools. They have come to realize as no other cultural instrumentality has realized and readjusted itself, that modern attitudes of morality, manhood and womanhood are a wide diversion from former postures. Our best private schools are therefore recasting the Moral Code of Youth so that our boys and girls may recover from this widespread and pernicious spirit of disinclination and learn to render a just account of their school days and the arduous work days which await them over the hills of learning.

It is easier and infinitely nobler to perform a task than to explain its nonperformance. Chicago's civic motto is: "I will." That spirit built one of the world's greatest cities on the wet site of a well-nigh bottomless swamp. It is the spirit behind intention that achieves the modern miracle! It is the new moral spirit that will make effective leaders of the boys and girls in our private schools. And they will not deign to utter the cry of—Ouch!

For the past five years, we have visited and re-visited Private Schools, North, East, South and West, and hazard the assertion that in these pages one or more institutions can be found to fill every educational requirement of the parent for the boy or girl of school age. To any readers of this magazine experiencing difficulty in finding just the right school, our assistance is freely offered. Your letter, setting forth your requirements with such detailed information about the boy or girl as will help us find you the school you seek, should be addressed personally to



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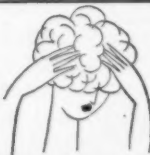
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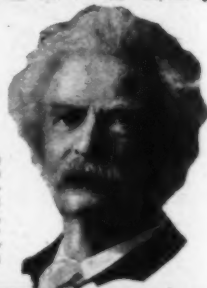


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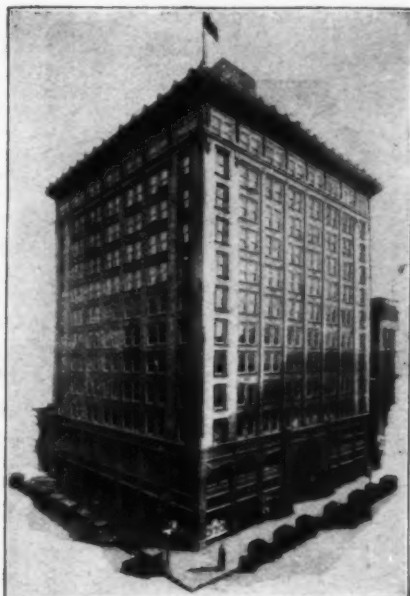
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THERE is a Beautiful Isle called Somewhere. Each of us holds clear title to it, although its location is a personal and profound secret. A man wearied by the day's work or discouraged by its results slips away to his Beautiful Isle, and the irritating concerns of the day fade into nothingness, the load of duties drops from his galled shoulders.

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The most successful man is the one who has a well-marked road to his Beautiful Isle. The neighbors, of course, know nothing about it. All they know is what happens after he has been on a prolonged visit to the secret place. They see him after he has breathed deep of its inspiring air, after his foot has touched the magic soil. All they know about it is that here is a man who sees farther and more clearly, who does more completely, more surely, more happily, than other men. By these signs he is a practical man. Well, he is. He is drawing on his inheritance. There is stored within each of us some of the wisdom and the power of all the men of all the ages. The wisdom of Solomon and patience of Job, the spirit of the Crusaders and the daring of the Masters of the Sea are ready to our call. Out of the past their voices speak to us, their spirits fire our own. But only in the silence.

Only on the Beautiful Isle of Somewhere can we close out the nagging of the hour and call the deep hidden forces within us to our aid. To each his own place, his own way. Cleveland went a-fishing. Roosevelt sought the still forests. John Finley walks all night under the stars. Cardinal Mercier kneels at the foot of the altar. Your grandmother reads an old Book that speaks of a peaceful land where there shall be no more tears, no more night, no more sorrow, a place all beautiful and bright; and from that promise she draws strength to go on for another day.

A day of working under the sun sends the most practical of us to seek rest and renewal of spirit.

Only the very, very young and untaught have not the secret of the Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.





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Supreme expression of fragrance, evoking the image of a delicate illustriousness that surrounds itself with the exquisite — conveying ever the atmosphere of a subtle sophisticated elegance. Parfum L'Origan is the unrivalled favorite throughout the world —

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No. 100 - Illustrated - 2 OUNCES
PURSE SIZES - ONE QUARTER,
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"THE ART OF PERFUMING"
a booklet subtly describing types of women
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The years have not robbed her of her beauty



Hers is the Natural Loveliness
that comes from protective care.
Millions are retaining the charm
of youth in this simple way.

The "middle-aged woman" is fast becoming a relic of other days.

Age no longer is the line of demarcation between days of charm and allure and the tasteless complacency of a chaperon's corner.

Women have learned to stay looking young...and "looking" young means being young

A GIRL yesterday, a woman today... then suddenly, "middle-aged."

You want to avoid it. Every woman does. And you can if you wish. Note the scores of women young at 30, charming in the forties that you see everywhere today. That will prove the point to you.

To gain it... that priceless gift of youth... you must follow natural laws of cleanliness in skin care. Artificial methods have been supplanted in modern beauty culture.

Start with Palmolive, nature's formula to keep that schoolgirl complexion. Don't let it slip away from you. You can't regain youth, but you can keep it.

DO THIS... then note the changes in your skin

Wash your face gently with soothing Palmolive. Then massage it softly into

the skin. Rinse thoroughly. Then repeat both washing and rinsing. If your skin is inclined to be dry, apply a touch of good cold cream—that is all.

Do this regularly, and particularly in the evening. Use powder and rouge if you wish. But never leave them on over night. They clog the pores, often enlarge them. Blackheads and disfigurements often follow. They must be washed away.

Avoid this mistake

Do not use ordinary soaps in the treatment given above. Do not think any green soap, or represented as of palm and olive oils, is the same as Palmolive.

It costs but 10c the cake!—so little that millions let it do for their bodies what it does for their faces. Obtain a cake today. Then note what an amazing difference one week makes.



THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY (Del. Corp.), CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Palmolive Soap is untouched by human hands until you break the wrapper—it is never sold unwrapped

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

By BRUCE BARTON

Tall Buildings

IN my journeyings I came across a sign which read:

THE NEW IMPROVED SCHOOL OF LAW
NO TEXTBOOKS—NO BLACKBOARD
NO HOME STUDY

The home of this school is the third floor of an unkempt building. In spite of its fair promises, it does not prosper. I inquired whether any Chief Justice had come forth from it, any eminent judge or prominent corporation attorney. The answer was no.

The same city has a school which has deliberately fostered a reputation for making its students work very hard. It is thronged with the sons of the rich.

For the rich know where their money came from. It came from hardship. They know how it will ultimately be lost: through softness. The easy school makes no appeal to them.

The tallest building in New York bears the name of a man who worked two years for six dollars a week. "Never once," he said, "did I receive one word of encouragement from a single soul."

At the end of two years he left to take another job at ten dollars a week and felt rich enough to marry. Two months later his salary was reduced to eight dollars. Work and worry wore him down and resulted in a sickness which nearly ended his life.

People pass that tall building today

and exclaim: "He had the idea of selling things for five and ten cents. What a simple idea! Why didn't somebody think of it before?"

Somebody did think of it; many people thought of it. It was an old idea—so old that three out of his first five stores were failures.

What built that tallest building was not the Idea. Bad luck had so toughened the fiber of that man that three failures meant nothing to him.

Beethoven, born in an attic, was harassed through life by sickness and poverty. "I am determined," he said, "so to live that the unhappy being may be consoled in finding another as unfortunate as himself, who in face of all obstacles has done everything possible to become worthy of the name Man."

Out of his struggles was born the music that has heartened millions.

Nature has some hard things in every generation that she wants to get done. Knowing that men seek naturally the easiest way, she attaches large prizes to these things.

Most of us pass by on the other side. But we can't complain that we failed because we did not know the rules.

The rules are old and plain. They are written in all great biographies, all great music, nearly all large fortunes, and almost all tall buildings.



How Beauty baffled the Marquis

"Fair lady, surely *this* will gain thy pleasure," said the Marquis, in a very pleading tone, as he presented his soap treasure, "for it brings the perfumes and colors of Oriental gardens. It is rich with the magic medicaments and nourishing oils of the ancients."

"How very sweet of you, Marquis," replied Beatrice. "And will it keep me beautiful?"

"Forever and ever!"

"I shall use it, then. Thank you. Return ten years from today, at this hour, and if I am still as beautiful as I am this moment, I *may* marry you."

But when Beatrice learned the truth—that, with all its perfumes and colors and oils and medicaments, his beguiling soap had none of the magic he had claimed for it—she grew very doubtful of the Marquis's reliability. So she married the nice young man who offered her a cottage by the sea and unlimited supplies of honest Ivory.

WHAT can a soap truthfully promise you? Magic? Of course not. Take Ivory. If you were to pay a dollar a cake, you could get no better soap.

But if Ivory, with all its excellence, should agree to transform your skin, or cure it, or "nourish" it with oils, that moment it would lay itself open to suspicion, would it not?

Ivory promises no magic. It simply protects the delicate bloom and texture of fine complexions by its purity and mildness. It leaves behind enough of the natural oil to keep your complexion clear and soft.

With Ivory, plus good health, the care of the skin becomes a simple matter.

PROCTER & GAMBLE



The RED BOOK Magazine

November 1925 • Volume XLVI • Number 1

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

EDGAR Sisson, *Associate Editor*

Proven Pudding

By Samuel
Merwin

HERE BEGINS A SHORT NOVEL by a famous novelist which presents a picture of that young feminine "Art" society in New York whose members have but two desires—to maintain their "freedom," and to bring the rest of America to agree with them. No franker disclosure of these young convention-scorners has ever been made.



The girl sank down on the bench, her eyes fixed on the smart little person before her.

Illustrated by Lester Ralph

BEE ran up the subway stairs. She always ran up. She was amusing to look at, an extremely small young-appearing person, definite, even positive, in every movement, in the poise of her pretty head and the quick firm activity of her trim body. The face that peeped out through an encroaching triangle of fur collar and hat brim was freshly, crisply vigorous, with a snap in the brown-black eyes and unmistakable signs of determination in the slight, attractive fullness about the mouth. Bee's only weak feature, as she knew, knew only too well, was her nose. That turned up. It suggested humor, even, delightfully, mischief, but hardly strength. And she did want to be strong. She was determined to be strong.

She emerged from the stairway on the curbed-in island that lies out nearly in the middle of Sheridan Square. It was mild for March. The afternoon sunlight slanted down through the

tangled westerly streets, warming the built-over studio fronts of Grove Street, and lighting brightly the quaint and aged green-painted house at the farther end of Washington Place. She stood a moment, breathing in the pleasant brisk air that had, in this wide, irregular area, something of the real outdoors in it, a sense of space, almost a tang. The traffic policeman at the stop-go sign grinned and saluted. She responded with a friendly wave. Beyond him, on a triangular corner—the Square, with its nine entering streets, is fairly bounded by sharp little triangular buildings, mostly old and mostly now coffee houses and other sorts of restaurants—stood the Greenwich Village Theater, that extremely modern structure in patterned brick. The question was, should she go there directly or step, first, over to the rooms. She glanced at her watch—all of half an hour—and decided on the rooms.

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The pleasantest feature of the Square is the small park that divides Grove Street from Christopher at the point where each enters the Square. An old iron fence surrounds this park, with a gate at the end that is surmounted by a flat arch in modest grill work. There is just room within the fence for a broad walk, two facing rows of benches and two rather pathetic marginal strips of vegetation. Bee loved the place. It fairly smelled of old New York, of the days when the now somewhat notorious Village was a village in truth, a suburb, with real trees and quiet dirt roads and (imaginably) leafy lanes. She always by choice walked through it in moving between subway and rooms. These latter were in Christopher Street over the old car tracks, directly facing that delightful, unattainable row of homes and studios in Grove Street—old houses all, houses with flavor and charm,

where famous painters and writers lived. But the flavor and charm of the little park was as much hers as theirs. She could have it every day, and so she took it. Here were every day babies with attendant nurses, and a few loungers who could only be described as bums, and other youthful unaccountables. Poets, perhaps. But all, with whatever outward briskness and composure she walked through, were like friends. They were a part of the picture, and the picture, for its quaintness, she loved.

Picking her way between trucks, she made the farther curb, and passed under the iron archway. A young woman sat alone, gazing wide-eyed out at the sunlit square, an old black suitcase at her feet. Bee's quick eyes half took her in—an attractive wisp of a girl with a sensitive oval of face (hazily familiar, that face) dressed not quite smartly, not New York, not suburban,



"Don't move!" Wilbur cried, as Delia stirred in her chair.

fevered scribbler of verse, with no dimmest sense of hour or place. At college they had fairly dragged her about to lectures, to meals, to bed. She'd never appeared to know quite where she was or what she ought to be doing or what was or wasn't done. She mislaid and forgot just about everything. A slightly uncanny, sometimes appallingly natural child she'd been at college. Forever lost in dreams that were to her reality. But gifted. They'd all felt that. Class poet and all.

"I meant to write you." It was a rather frightened little voice. "I did mean to." But of course she hadn't. She couldn't be definite. She giggled musically; then sobered in a still, scared way, gazing out at the Square. "So this is Greenwich Village!"

"It certainly is, dear. My, but I'm glad to see you. What have you been doing with yourself these two years and more?"

"Secretary. Yes, in business."

"In Worcester?" Delia nodded. "Oh, I'm a practical person now." Humor, that. "But, Bee, I just couldn't stand it."

"It's hard to imagine you standing it."

"Oh, but I can do it. Honest I can. They begged me not to leave."

"Oh, you left?"

Delia was fumbling through the Boston bag. "Here! I've been writing, Bee. See this."

"We all knew you would write, of course." Bee looked over the clipped-out

not Western; probably New England, rather quaintly New England—yes, on her lap, of all things, clutched in two frail, ungloved hands, one of those shapeless little grips of soft leather with two handles but no lock or clasp, known as a Boston bag! Surprise jostled memory. Bee stopped in her tracks; looked fully. The girl was rising.

"Not Delia?"

"Oh, Bee!"

"What on earth—"

"Well." The girl sank down again on the bench, her great wistful blue eyes fixed on the smart little person before her.

"What on earth—" Bee began again, taking in the suitcase and that comical bag. But Delia hadn't yet arrived at words. She'd always been inarticulate, vague, an absorbed reader, a

poems. "What did these appear in—not magazines?"

"Yes." A giggle. "And some newspapers. I couldn't help thinking there might be a place for me down here. I've had some wonderful letters from editors. And it was so hard up there—oh, home and everything!—that I just couldn't stand it any longer. Oh, a lot of things. Those Puritan pressures. A man's been trying to marry me, and my people kept at me about it. They were determined to get me safely married." ("People are like that," Bee put in, sapiently, with a brisk nod.) "So finally—well, here I am. I've never been in New York before."

"You mean you've just plumped in here?"

Delia's fringed lids fluttered. "That's about it. Oh, I suppose it's risky. I haven't got much money. Just the little I could save from week to week. And everybody says there's nothing in

poetry, no sort of living, but—well, I thought I could pick up some kind of work while I'm making my way. And I don't care how I live. There ought to be a hall-bedroom somewhere for me." A wan look crept into the elfin face. "I thought—I thought you might help me find a place. But I lost your address. It was awfully careless. I knew it was Christopher Street right near Sheridan Square. Betty told me about you last year. So I got this far. And now here you are. Pretty wonderful, isn't it?" She had certainly found her tongue. And having found it, she talked nervously on. "Betty told me you'd gone on the stage." ("Not very far on," remarked Bee, soberly.) "That must be wonderful. Oh, how I'd love to do that! But I haven't a shred of talent for it. I'm afraid it's going to be writing or nothing for me."

Bee was thinking in her swift way. It would hardly do to turn this child loose in the Village.

"Did your people mind your coming?"

Delia slowly nodded. "It was a good deal of an uprooting. But my letters helped. And then I'm afraid I—well, just ran out. The breaking point wasn't far off. I had to do something."

"I'll tell you," said Bee, crisply, "you're coming right in with us."

"Oh, I didn't mean that. No! I only want you to advise me a little. Help me find a place to live. You do turn to some one, you know."

But Bee was on her feet and had the suitcase. "Come on. It's just over here." She led the way out through the farther end of the enclosure. "You'll love Louise. She's the girl I live with. She works in a big store uptown. In the decorating department. One of these days she's bound to be a regular interior decorator on her own. We're the more or less original two female musketeers, Lou and I. But of course there ought to be three of us."

She unlocked a door, and they climbed three flights of dark stairs. It was an old building with a stuffy smell. The apartment proved to be a mere two rooms and cupboard kitchenette, with a bathroom smaller than Delia would have supposed possible. But there were bright chintzes and shelves of books, and the furniture was comfortable. Crowded into a corner by the radiator was an upright piano, old and very small, with a number of current popular songs. A center table was littered with radical magazines which Delia eyed with quickening interest.

"You'll sleep here," said Bee, indicating the couch. "It's perfectly simple for us. We'll love having you."



Delia stood looking out at those charming old Grove Street houses across the park. The tall studio windows caught her eye. Her breath came a little short, and her eyes filled.

"Bee, I simply can't—oh, for a night or two, maybe—but—"

"Shucks. You can pay rent if you want to. It'll be larks. Three of us! Of course!"

Delia moved over to the couch and sank down on it. She was a lovely slim creature, crying a little, but laughing too in her soft way. "Oh, Bee, you're wonderful!"

"Don't be silly! I've got to step over to the theater for a rehearsal. They're working some new people in."

"You're acting now?" Delia's wet eyes danced at the thought.

"Sort of," replied Bee, rather grimly. "I'm in the chorus of 'The Gondoliers.' It's better than nothing. And the crowd isn't bad. All from the Village here. It really doesn't mean



— LESLIE RALPH —

A gay girl from "The Gondoliers," after a few cocktails, insisted on practicing dance steps.

that I'm a chorus girl. You can look in a little later if you feel like it. The stage door is to the right of the theater entrance. Just across the Square there."

"I've never been in a stage door."

Bee smiled. "You'll get used to that."

She turned to go. "Just make yourself comfortable here. Hang your things in the right-hand closet with mine. There in the bedroom. If Louise comes in, explain yourself. She'll understand. She understands everything. Forgive me for hurrying off, wont you? You'll find cigarettes in that little Russian box on the table."

"Oh, Bee, you are wonderful—"

"Now don't—"

"I can't tell you how I feel! Really being here in New York! Oh, freedom! Like the beginning of life. It was the

breaking point. I'd have had to marry that man if I'd stayed. Or simply wreck the family life. Families—I don't know. They puzzle me."

"As an economic unit for the conservation of property, I suppose the family's all well enough," said Bee. "If they'd stop all this bourgeois sentimentality about it. I'm not for marriage myself. Life's too interesting."

Delia nodded eagerly.

"I know. If you can once shake free. All those little threads tied around you!"

"Well, at least here we are! And I've got to run. Come over in an hour. Then we'll find Lou and have dinner somewhere. Begin getting acquainted. Or wait here if you like."

As she ran down the stairs Bee reflected rapidly. Lucky she'd found the child. Take care of her.

DELIA, her coat thrown carelessly aside but her hat still on, sat quietly in the wicker chair by the window; quietly, but her slim fingers were tightly clasped. She unclasped them only to twist her handkerchief into a tight ball. People moved about in the street and park below, assured New Yorkers. Tomorrow she'd go up to the Metropolitan Museum. And perhaps Times Square in the evening to see the electric signs. It wouldn't be like Worcester. She ought to unpack and hang up her things. But she couldn't. Not yet. There were sounds here in the building. A telephone rang and rang somewhere below. She wished they'd answer it. A pleasant boyish voice called up the stairs and a girl called back something or other. Others lived here, too. She wondered about them. Those voices had a jolly, free-and-easy sound. The boy, or man, ran up a flight of stairs; a door opened and closed; more faintly she could hear their voices. So they visited around in one another's rooms. Of course, though. Greenwich Village. You wouldn't have to keep thinking frantically about the observances, as in Worcester. Yes, they still did that in Worcester, the older people. The younger ones kept their own counsel. It would be homelier here—Freedom!

Her fingers moved curiously toward the box that Bee had said was Russian. A yellow and green boy and girl against a red background. Very gay. She opened it. There were the cigarettes. She had never smoked enough to feel comfortable about it. She lighted one, and tried to hold it with a casual naturalness between the first and third fingers. And decided not to puff so hard.

Her eyes rested on the bookshelves. Modern-looking volumes in black and orange and red. There was Freud on Dreams and on Psycho-analysis. She had meant for years to read Freud. But there'd been little extra money at home for books. Besides, the family were forever in and out of her room, and Freud would have disturbed their Puritan calm. There were many volumes of poetry, by men and women she'd never heard of. She glanced into two or three; free verse, for the most part, each page with its challenge in the new bold manner that stirred a long-suppressed tingle in her blood. They didn't care what they said or printed, these apostles of freedom. It was stirring. There were books on the theater, and printed plays. Many of these. Joyce's "Ulysses," of course. Chekov she knew slightly. Pushkin was represented. Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" she took down, then replaced. She would read that. "The Idiot," too. And a richly illustrated fat volume about the Moscow Art Theater. All new ground to Delia, a magical land of the imagination that she had viewed as through a barred gate. But the book she carried back to the window was Freud on Dreams.

Away below, the street door opened and closed, a muffled sound. Then steps on the stairs. One flight they mounted, then another—the third, very near. A man, she thought. Now he was coming slowly along the hall; he stood a long moment outside. She heard a rustling and a faint jingle; then a key grated into the lock and turned.

She neither moved nor spoke. She couldn't.

The door opened. Yes, it was a man—young, blond, slender. Not a strong sort. She caught a quick impression of small features, a sensitive down-drooping mouth, very pale eyes with confusion in them. Though of good height, he moved almost like a girl and seemed small. She noted a slender white hand on the door knob, a remarkably sensitive hand. He carried a parcel rolled up in a newspaper and a wooden box with a handle.

All he said was, "Oh!" And stood there.

SHE was frightened, a little, and altogether confused; and yet she had to repress a giggle. After all, why not adventure? Let it come rushing at you? Why not?

"I didn't suppose there'd be anybody here," he said; forlornly, she thought. His voice was gentle and pitched rather high.

"Neither did I." That somewhat hysterical giggle again. She felt his wan eyes on her and caught herself.

"You may have heard the girls speak of me. I'm Wilbur Sayles."

"I haven't heard them speak of anybody. I—I just came." What a thin little voice hers was!

"Well—" he partly closed the door, then hesitated. "Do you mind if I come in? I'm supposed to—well, to wait here."

"So am I."

This reassured him. He did close the door. Dropped parcel and box on the couch and sank down beside them. Then abruptly he covered his face with his hands and swayed back and

forth. She watched him, all alert curious interest, fascinated indeed. He looked almost as if he might be going to cry.

"Don't you feel well?" she heard herself asking. In a prim little voice which the new freedom in her spirit instantly and hotly resented. It mustn't sound like that. She would learn to talk easily and prettily, like Bee. Breathe more deeply.

"I feel like the devil. Oh, not health. It's mental."

"Oh! That's too bad." Still prim, in spite of that inner struggle. Could it be that she was, with all said and done, nothing but a congenital little spinster from Worcester?

He jumped up, giving her a start, and went to the window. Stared down into the park. "I'm afraid I've done a terrible thing."

Certainly this strange youth was full of self, and made no bones about it. "Natural," she thought. "Perfectly natural. I must be natural too."

"Now that I've done it, I've got to believe that Lou was right. I've got to. You know Lou."

"No, I don't. I've never even seen her."

"Then you're a friend of Bee's?" She nodded.

"Bee's a peach. Just a born good scout. Take her right now, you'd never know what she's up against."

"Is she in trouble?"

"Oh, yes. But you wouldn't know. Out of work for months. She picked up this chorus job to keep alive. She had a pretty good part promised with the Guild, but they decided on a taller girl. And she got her notice last week, over here."

"Got her notice?"

"Yes. Out. Saturday night. But Bee always keeps up a front."

FOR the moment he seemed to forget himself. But now he took abruptly to pacing the floor and pressed his hands again to his face.

"I'm afraid I'm not very good company just now. I—I'm just about beside myself. If it wasn't for Lou I think I'd have jumped into the river."

Delia's fingers tightened about the wickerwork of the chair. He whirled on her, quite as if she had accused him. "I've got the Oedipus complex. I can't tell you what I've— When a man turns against his own mother— Well—" He threw out his hands. "I've never been away from her a night in my life. Not before this. But Lou fairly made me come down here. Got me out of the store. Just packed me off. She called up herself, this noon, found Mother was out, and went with me to pack a few clothes. I don't believe I could have done it alone. Then she had to go back to the store. Lou's wonderful. You know, steady about things, about life."

Delia's wisp of a body was curled up like a child's in the wicker chair. She couldn't take her eyes off him. Was she about to giggle again? She clamped her lips shut.

"My mother's been everything to me." He was talking on. "Simply everything. She's put up with every sort of hardship just so I could— Oh, I can't talk about it!"

An impulse from some impish source within her prompted Delia to ask, "Then why do you?" But she kept still. Her eyes were roving from his parcels on the couch to her own small luggage in the corner. That ever-lurking giggle must be sat on firmly.

Again he confronted her. But now he seemed to be studying her—face, head, body, even feet. Suddenly he whipped off his coat. Her lids drooped. "I like your head," he remarked, as if it were a perfectly natural thing to say to a strange girl. It was quite possible that he was crazy. Better take that into account and quietly humor him. She could always get away with the excuse of joining Bee at the theater. She could, that was, if he didn't lock her in. She glanced furtively out the window. The street looked pretty far down. But there was a fire escape.

"Do you mind," he asked, "if I sketch you? I've got to do something."

Before she could order her thoughts into a reply, he had opened the wooden box. She saw a palette and brushes and tubes of paint. Of course! An artist! Naturally he'd be odd. Moving with extraordinarily deft quickness he brought a small chair from the bedroom, propped up a little square of canvas board on the seat, and squeezed out on the palette a row of squirming gay worms of color. It was to be a painting, then. She'd never been painted. He had the comfortable air of knowing, now, precisely what he was about. Familiar routine. When he came to her and with his light hands removed her hat



"I haven't slept much. I don't seem to remember just what happened."

and (with an exclamation of pleasure) touched her hair here and there, he was impersonally professional in manner. Even when he dropped on one knee and moved the foot she wasn't sitting on and rearranged the folds of her skirt, she didn't mind. Like a photographer, she thought. Or a dressmaker.

DELIA didn't appear at the theater. But that wasn't surprising. Bee recalled that in their college days they'd been forever looking her up. And it was as well, today. The occasion was hardly inspiring. The girl who was to take Bee's place appeared, and then she was casually told that she might go. But she kept her chin up, and smiled. Briskly enough she dodged through the traffic of the square and entered Christopher Street.

A red cab was pulling up at the curb. A tall girl stepped out—Lou.

"Well, my word," cried Bee, "a taxi!"

Lou was opening her purse. "Oh, hello, Bee," she replied. "Here, take that fool thing up, will you? Don't drop it. It's heavy."

Bee looked within the cab and saw a round package wrapped in

brown paper. As she lifted it out her fingers closed about the curving top and the small round handle of a gallon jug. The chauffeur grinned.

"Better get it right in," said Lou, in her businesslike way, as she counted out the fare. She followed, then, and caught up with Bee on the top flight. "It's that alcohol," she explained. "Mr. Hargrove got it for me."

"What did it stand you?"

"Eleven dollars. I'm flat."

"That's five-fifty more I owe you."

"Never mind that. I had to take some drastic steps today. Wilbur. He blew up. Couldn't work at all. What he needs is a party. Release a few of those frightful inhibitions of his. And a party it's going to be—if I never eat or drink again."

"Sounds good to me," said Bee. "Open the door, Lou."

"Can't. Gave my key to Wilbur. He should be here." And she knocked.

The door opened. There stood the young man, coatless, hair ruffled, palette in hand. And curled up in the wicker chair with a book in her lap, sat Delia.

(Continued on page 142)



What Saraïde

By James Branch

MANY years ago there came to the desk of the editor of this magazine a short story of such originality, power and charm that the prophecy was then made of its author that if all went well, the day would come when he would be acclaimed one of the most distinguished writers in America. The young man who wrote that story was James Branch Cabell; and today, not only in America, but in Europe as well, no writer of fiction is better known than he. Here is his latest short story—in the manner of his famous "Singers."

TO Kerin of Nointel it seemed that he could understand his third wife no better than he had understood the others. But for that perhaps unavoidable drawback to matrimony, he lived comfortably enough with this Saraïde, whom many called a witch, in her ill-spoken-of, eight-sided home beside the Well of Ogde. This home was gray, with a thatched roof upon which grew abundant mosses and many small wild plants; a pair of storks nested on the gable; and elder trees shaded all.

Now, of the origin of Saraïde there is nothing which can be told with profit and decorum: it is enough to say that an ambiguous parentage had



Wanted

Cabell

Illustrated by
Arthur E. Becher

provided this Saraïde with a talisman by which you might know the truth when truth was found. And one of the many things about Kerin's wife which Kerin could not quite understand, was her constant complaining that she had not found out assuredly the truth about anything, and, in particular, the truth as to Saraïde.

"I exist," she would observe to her husband, "and I am in the main as other women. Therefore, this Saraïde is very certainly a natural phenomenon. And in Nature everything appears to be intended for this or the other purpose. Indeed, after however hasty consideration of the young woman known as Saraïde, one inevitably deduces that so much of loveliness and wit and aspiration, of color and perfume and tenderness, was not put

together haphazardly; and that the compound was painstakingly designed to serve some purpose or another purpose. It is about that purpose I want knowledge."

And Kerin would reply, "As you like, my dear."

So this young Saraïde, whom many called a witch, had sought, night after night, for the desired knowledge, in widely various surroundings, from the clergy, from men of business, from poets, and from friends; and had wakened in her talisman every color save only that golden shining which would proclaim her capture of the truth. This clear soft yellow ray, as she explained to Kerin, would have to be evoked, if ever, in the night season, because by day its radiance might pass unnoticed and her perception of the truth be lost.

Kerin could understand the common-sense of this, at any rate. And so young Saraïde was unfailingly heartened in all such nocturnal experiments by the encouragement of her fond husband.

"And do not be discouraged, wife," he would exhort her, as he was now exhorting, upon this fine spring evening: "for women and their belongings are, beyond doubt, of some use or another, which



by and by will be discovered. Meanwhile, my darling, what were you saying there is for supper? For that at least is a matter of real importance—"

But Saraïde said only, in that quick, inconsequential childish way of hers: "O Kerin of my heart, I do so want to know the truth about this and about all other matters!"

"Come, come, Saraïde! Let us not despair about the truth, either; for they tell me that truth lies somewhere at the bottom of a well, and at virtually the door of our home is a most notable well. Our location is thus quite favorable, if we but keep patience. And sooner or later the truth comes to light, they tell me also,—out of, it may be, the darkness of this same Well of Ogde,—because truth is mighty and will prevail."

"No doubt," said Saraïde: "but throughout all the long while between now and then, my Kerin, you will be voicing just such sentiments!"

"—For truth is stranger than fiction. Yes, and truth will sometimes come even out of the devil's mouth."

Saraïde fidgeted. And what now came out of her own angelic mouth was a yawn.

"Truth is not easily found," Sir Kerin continued. "The truth is extremely hard to come to: roses and truth have thorns about them."

"Perhaps," said Saraïde. "But against banalities a married woman has no protection whatever."

"Yet truth," Sir Kerin went on with his kindly encouragement, "may languish, but can never perish. Though malice may darken truth, it cannot put it out."

"Husband of mine," said Saraïde, "sometimes I find your wisdom such that I wonder how I ever came to marry you!"

But Kerin waved aside her tribute modestly. "It is merely that I too admire the truth. For truth is the best buckler. Truth never grows old. Truth seeks no corners. Truth makes the devil blush."

"Good Lord!" said Saraïde. And for no reason at all she stamped her foot.

"—So everybody, in whatsoever surroundings, ought to be as truthful as I am now, my pet, in observing that this hour is considerably past our usual hour for supper, and that I have had rather a hard day of it—"

But Saraïde had gone away from him, as if in meditation, toward the curbing about the great and bottomless Well of Ogde. "Among these general observations, about devils and bucklers and supper time, I find only one which may perhaps be helpful. Truth lies, you tell me, at the bottom of a well just such as this well?"

"That is the contention alike of Cleanthes and of Democritus the derider."

"May the truth not lie indeed, then, just as you suggested, at the bottom of this identical well? For the Zhar Ptiza alone knows the truth about all things, and I recall an old legend that the bird who has the true wisdom used to nest in this part of Poictesme."

Kerin looked over the stone ledge about the great and bottomless Well of Ogde, peering downward as far as might be. "I consider it improbable, dear wife, that the Zhar Ptiza, who is every-



where known to be the most wise and most ancient of birds and of all living creatures, would select such a cheerless-looking hole to live in. Still, you never can tell; the wise affect profundity: and this well is known to be deep beyond the knowledge of man. Now Nature, as Cicero informs us, in *profundo veritatem penitus abstruserit*—

"Good Lord!" said Saraïde again, but with more emphasis. "Do you slip down there, then, like a dear fellow, and find the truth for me."

Saying this, she pushed her husband into the great and bottomless Well of Ogde.

AND the unexpectedness of it all, alike of Saraïde's assault and of the astonishing discovery that you could fall for hundreds after hundreds of feet, full upon your head, without getting even a bruise, a little bewildered Kerin when he first sat up at the bottom of the well. He shouted cheerily, "Wife, wife, I am not hurt a bit!" because the fact seemed so remarkably fortunate and unaccountable.

But at once large stones began to fall everywhere about him, as though Saraïde upon hearing again his voice had begun desperately to heave these stones into the well. Kerin thought this an inordinate manner of spurring him onward in the quest of knowledge and truth, because the habitual impetuosity of Saraïde, when thus expressed with cobblestones, would infallibly have been his death had he not sought refuge in the opening he very luckily found to the southwest side. There was really no understanding these women who married you, Kerin reflected, as after crawling

for a while upon hands and feet, he came to a yet larger opening in which he could stand erect.

But this passage led Kerin presently to an underground lake, which filled all that part of the cavern, so that he could venture no farther. Instead, he sat down upon the border of these gloomy and endless-looking waters. He could see these waters because of the many *ignes fatui*, such as are called corpse candles, which flickered and danced above the dark lake's surface everywhere.

Kerin in such dismal circumstances began to pray. He loyally gave precedence to his own faith, and said, first, all the prayers of his church that he could remember: when no response was vouchsafed, Kerin inferred that he had, no doubt, in falling so far descended into heretical regions and into the nefarious control of unchristian deities. So he prayed fervently to all the accursed gods of the heathen that he could remember. Still, nothing happened.

Kerin nevertheless well knew, as a loyal son of the church, the efficacy of prayer: and he now began, in consequence, to pray to the corpse candles, because these might, he reflected, rank as deities in this peculiarly depressing place. And his comfort was considerable when, after an *ave* or two, some of these dancing lights came flitting toward him; but his surprise was greater when he saw that each of the *ignes fatui* was a living creature like a tiny phosphorescent maiden in everything except that each had the head of a lizard.

"What is your nature," Kerin asked, "and what are you doing in this cold dark place?"

(Continued on page 138)

No Luck

By

Richard Washburn Child

No American ever lived through a European upheaval of greater significance than Mr. Child, for it was during his years of service as United States Ambassador to Italy that the black-shirted Fascisti took things into their own hands and Mussolini sprang up overnight as a new figure against the European background, and snatched the reins he still holds. Now that Mr. Child is back in America he has turned again to fiction, which he always preferred to ambassadoring.



Illustrated by T. D. Skidmore

APPLEBY'S was the case. His real Christian name has gone from my mind. He was an employee of mine at one time and everyone called him "Baron," just as everyone calls him "Baron" now. He looked like a baron—a graceful, lean, likable young person with a foreign flavor. He spoke of himself as a "modernist." He dressed, as much as his means would allow, in the style which he himself would call "faultless." He had ability too. At twenty-eight he was earning a good salary as an efficiency expert; but the moment one set eyes upon him there was the impression that he was the scion of a rich house.

Appleby's father had been a country doctor—the kind that has dandruff on the coat collar, but Baron went to the other extreme. His hair was brushed back from his forehead in damp, glossy, almost painful neatness. He had nice, fine, spare features which somehow appeared to fit in with a slender but strong body. His appearance convinced young women that here was a wonderful dancer. But he was a wretched dancer. And he scorned most young women.

"They," said he, speaking of the average modern young woman, "represent futility. I can understand a man devoting himself to the old-time ideals of sound, safe women—the real home-makers. Or I can imagine a great romance—something with a cosmopolitan, world-wide flavor, adventure and great settings. But from what I call 'just girls,' deliver me! And that kind is all I can find. Possibly that's my luck."

He was obsessed, like others, about his luck. If he left an umbrella on a train it was luck, bad luck, and not merely bad luck; he called it "my bad luck" as if he had a monopoly. If he was radiantly healthy he attributed this to his good care of himself; if he made fair progress as an assistant executive he laid tribute at the feet of his own industry and brains; but if he went out to Cleveland to make a research and failed to find any pajamas in his bag after he was on the train he spoke of "my rotten luck."

"At cards," he said, "I am the unluckiest man alive, just as I am at golf. I never get a hand and I never get a good lie—even in the fairway. I can't find any comfort except in the hope that all this means that some day I will be lucky in love. It may come to me suddenly."

The Countess Abelardi di Vespa, did in fact come to Baron Appleby with comparative suddenness. It turned out that her name was Olga and he has never forgotten her or that name. He came across it the other day—number 51 horizontal in a cross-word puzzle—and he said that he put his pencil back in his pocket, folded up the newspaper and for a long time stared out the car window at the flashing-by of suburban scenery, and came back into a realization of the realities mumbling to himself: "My luck, my luck! Whoever had such an experience!"

It may be admitted that few had his experience and that others may also have found it memorable. Perhaps it was, after all, Baron Appleby's luck.

HE was going to Washington. He says that the train had just left Trenton. He had been loolling back in the green drawing-room car seat reading one of those semi-scientific business magazines with charts, and inspirational articles written as narcotics for ambitious youth which has dedicated itself to the go-getting religion. He had thrown the magazine down, yawned and taken out his handsome gold watch—a watch of distinction. All of Baron's appointments are modern, costly—distinguished. Then, he says, he "felt eyes upon him."

The eyes were large, brown and limpid. They belonged to a gorgeous person. There may be charm in the nodding violet and allurements in the smiling pansy, but here, before Baron's gaze, was the expansive glory of the peony. He had turned as if the eyes had turned him around the way torpedoes are steered by waves of radio. The eyes were smiling—smiling inscrutably, like Mona Lisa. The smile moved down from the big brown



"I saw your advertisement," he said. "Rooms—a room for—"

eyes, faintly crinkled a long characterful nose and lit upon the full lips. These lips had been tinted in that peculiar cerise which is more often seen abroad. It made Baron think of Ciro's, of Deauville, of Monte Carlo. And then there was that inexplicable something about her clothes, that subtle Continental smartness!

She parted her lips as their eyes continued to meet. It was as if she had been forced by some epoch-making astonishment to take in a new breath of air or inhale some fragrance of a great expectation.

Baron knew that he should jump up and go to this friendly, expressive stranger but, hesitating, he was lost. The moment to act spontaneously passes, and then to act appears like an awkward advance made after cautious deliberation. And he did, in fact, indulge in some deliberation. He was not used to seizing opportunities to make acquaintances in trains and hotel lobbies.

Heaven knew where they would lead—usually to mere, stupid, boresome futility. Some might be dangerous; he could tolerate danger if he were prepared for it. He thought of all this, weighed it, felt like a fool, turned back, picked up his magazine as if he preferred it to the girl, and cursed his luck. But he was thinking that if they were only alone and if she were only sensible she would come across the aisle and put her arms around his blushing neck. What a comfort it would be if this damnable barrier which separates soul

from soul, particularly on the tops of busses and such places, could be crashed to splinters.

YOUNG Appleby did not turn around again for ten minutes. During those ten minutes he reflected that if his luck should ever turn it would be because of some woman—some great good fortune of the heart. And he had thrown away, perhaps, that pulsing opportunity! He had turned his back upon a lady of distinguished appearance, a woman of rich, warm color and charm, a girl of rareness—a foreigner, perhaps—who knows?—of titled position, who wore no wedding ring on her velvety hand and who had deigned to smile her favor upon him.

"So you, my friend, are the man who prides himself on his worldly wisdom!" said he to himself reproachfully. "And now if you attempt an embarrassed advance she will only think you a stupid ass."

Other passengers were leaving for luncheon in the dining-car. They lurched by. The car was almost empty. He believed he had heard a little sob. So great was his sympathy that a gulp rose in his own throat as he turned around. The weeping of little blonde women may be touching, but such women weep

easily; the tears of the tall, statuesque, dark ones come from greater depth—at least, when the victim of sorrow is not only tall and dark but beautiful!

"Can I do—do— Shall I—?" stammered Baron.

She dried the corners of her limpid eyes with a tiny handkerchief and with the grip of her tense hand she squeezed into the air, it seemed, the odors of early spring flowers.

"Ah no," she replied. "You must forgive me. It is the foolishness—s!"

He sat gingerly on the edge of the chair next to hers and something, which he identified as his heart, rose up in his throat. His tongue felt swollen. His words sounded thick.

"If I could do anything—?"

"Ah, my dear stranger—you are sooch a kind heart of people. But we shall say nothing more. Life is vera—vera happy. It is

nothing to fear—ah! unless one is so alone in these great wonderful your land."

"And are you alone?" asked Baron, hoping that she was without a friend in the world.

"Ha!" she replied explosively. "Am I alone? Complete! Absolutely! But for poor little me—well, what deference, eh? We—we—laugh!"

A brave spirit this!

"You have not been long in America?"

SHE smiled. "Three week. No more. I am a Russian." She rolled the R so that it was like the trill of a bird among apple blossoms. "A Russian. All we poor Russians—*émigrés*. Ah—ha! Nevair mind. I am marri-*eed* to an Italian."

"Married!" exclaimed Appleby.

"Eet also iss no more." She shrugged her shoulders. "He iss drowned een the Bosphorus—almost immedi-ate! So!"

She did not seem to care. He was glad that the wound had been so quickly healed.

"Are you having—er—luncheon?" asked Baron. He, in advance, had drawn all kinds of indictments against her. He had suspected her of being coarse—perhaps of having a raucous voice, and that surprise of illiteracy which one sometimes finds in well-dressed, pretty women.

She had already shown her exquisite refinement and her voice was like a little brook of the green wood, coursing over white pebbles. He had speculated as to whether she was what he called a "gold digger," but now at his embarrassed invitation to luncheon she was blushing—the velvety cheeks were aflame with becoming modesty and reluctance perhaps to accept any favor from him. He had a great reaction against the cautious, sophisticated, narrow-minded, selfish suspicions; he had done her a huge injustice—this well-bred Russian with shapely expressive fingers which gestured so charmingly as she spoke. He felt himself a brute.

"I weel like to talk weeth you!" she said with her foreign directness and simplicity. "If we have or have not something to eat eet iss all same to me. Wait!"

She held up a finger as if to bid all the world to stop its affairs while she searched through her scarlet leather purse. Baron wondered where she kept her money. The purse yawned empty.

"Ha!" she said at last. "I have zem now. My *carte*. Zis! Eet iss myself!"

He took the card. He looked. No mistake. There was the engraved coronet—"Countess Olga Abelardi di Vesta."

"Oh, yes!" he exclaimed as if to say that he had heard the name a thousand times before. "My—er—my name is Appleby. I am from New York."

"Eet iss a place where everybody iss so reech!"

"I'm not rich," said he. "My family left me almost nothing. I am only—well—"

"I know," she said. "I know vera, vera mooch about you. You are modest. You have a fine sense of the arts, eh? Ah, and you understand well ze women. But you like not ze women."

"How did you know that?" he exclaimed. "It is true, but sometimes—a particular one—an exception—"

"Of course, my friend!" she exclaimed. "Eet iss always like that weeth ze sensitive soul which iss so lonely, eh?"

Baron could feel the blood coursing more vigorously in his temples and finger-tips. When she had grown particularly earnest in her strange, childlike way she forgot all self-consciousness and put her palm in a friendly curve over the back of his well-bronzed hand. It was very nice.

MID-AFTERNOON had come; luncheon had receded into a whirling past of spiritual adventure and forgetfulness before he had succeeded in drawing from her reluctance some indication of why she had come to America and whither she was going and why.

"How leetle you have know of me," she protested.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, with deep sincerity. "I feel as if I had known you always—er—"

She beamed upon him. "You may say eet—Olga. Perhaps—who knows—after Baltimore—we shall not evair see each again."

"Nonsense," said Baron. "Well, I say it. I have known you a thousand years, Olga. Why are you getting off—in Baltimore?"

She was loath to tell him; that he could see. She looked down at her ringless fingers and velvety hands. She took off her hat and tossed her almost-black, bobbed hair with her finger-tips. She shook her head at him.

"So commonplace!" she protested. "So stupid! So vulgar!"

"Tell," said he in an attempt at authoritative mastery.

"Eet was what made me weep," she said, capitulating suddenly. "You believe grief. But no! Eet was humiliation. We Russians who have had everything and have nothing!"

"You need money?" he asked with a gasp.

"No—no—no!" she exclaimed in indignant protest. "I need no money. You shall see. I am reech. I have my husband's great villa near Napoli—Naples. And—"

She produced from her purse an orange-colored paper. It looked like a bill of lading. She opened it and it was a bill of lading—with the words "Duplicate—Void" stamped across its face. At the moment Appleby was entranced by the length of her black eyelashes. As she looked downward into her lap they seemed to rest upon the soft loveliness of her cheeks.

"Well?" said he.

She blushed. "Please do not think eet iss my lack of modesty," she cautioned in her cello-like tones. "You have ask it. So I show you. You have heard of ze great Strogonoff collection. Ah, what be-autiful primitives of Italian art, eh? Well, then you have heard maybe of ze Abelardi collection, eh? Eet was my husband's. Eet iss mine—Van Dyck, Pietro di Siena, Raphael, Filippo Lippi, and so and so and so!"

"And these pictures—are they at the—villa—in Naples?" Baron wet his dry lips, tastily.

"But no!" she exclaimed. "These are mine. Most of all. Look—ze bill of lading."

"And the original of this duplicate? You must have the original to get the pictures." He had become the counselor, the business man, the commercial expert.

A wan look of sadness fell upon her brown eyes and drew down the corners of her mouth.

"Ah, eet iss for that I have come across the sea. My pictures I must sell. They are in New York. But to get them one moost have the bill of lading, eh?"

"And who has it?"

"Eet iss my dead husband's brother. You know heem—Leone Abelardi, eh?"

APPLEBY shook his head and endeavored to say as tenderly as possible, "I never heard of him."

"Ha! He iss one great rascal. My husband he also." Her voice trembled. "He was not good, but he was honest. Ze brother—he iss a greatest rascal. He claims ze right to ze pictures. He knows zis iss foolishness. But he know I am alone. Have I money for making legal causes? None! I have three-quarter million dollars of paintings. Maybe not so mooch, but almost. And not one centime. But he say he will give me ze bill of lading for five hundred dollars. Therefore, I come to Baltimore to meet Leone at ze hotel. Perhaps I beg him to be merciful. You understand."

"And you'll pay him this blackmail—this five hundred dollars?" "But no!" She uttered a little scornful laugh. "I have not five hundred dollars. To get five hundred dollars I moost wait three, four, five weeks."

"Could I—?" began Baron. He was completely intoxicated by her. She was so helpless. And, after all, if she had a purpose to get money from him now that purpose would come to the surface.

Suddenly she pressed the little handkerchief to her eyes. When she took it away she gazed at him in alarm, horror, and sorrow—the look of a friendly wild deer who has trusted the hunter and been wounded to the heart.

"I would die, my friend, before I would make such a suggestion," she said. "How you have hurt me! I promise you one thing. Eef I know you one hundred years I would not take one centime of money from you—not one. How you have hurt me!"

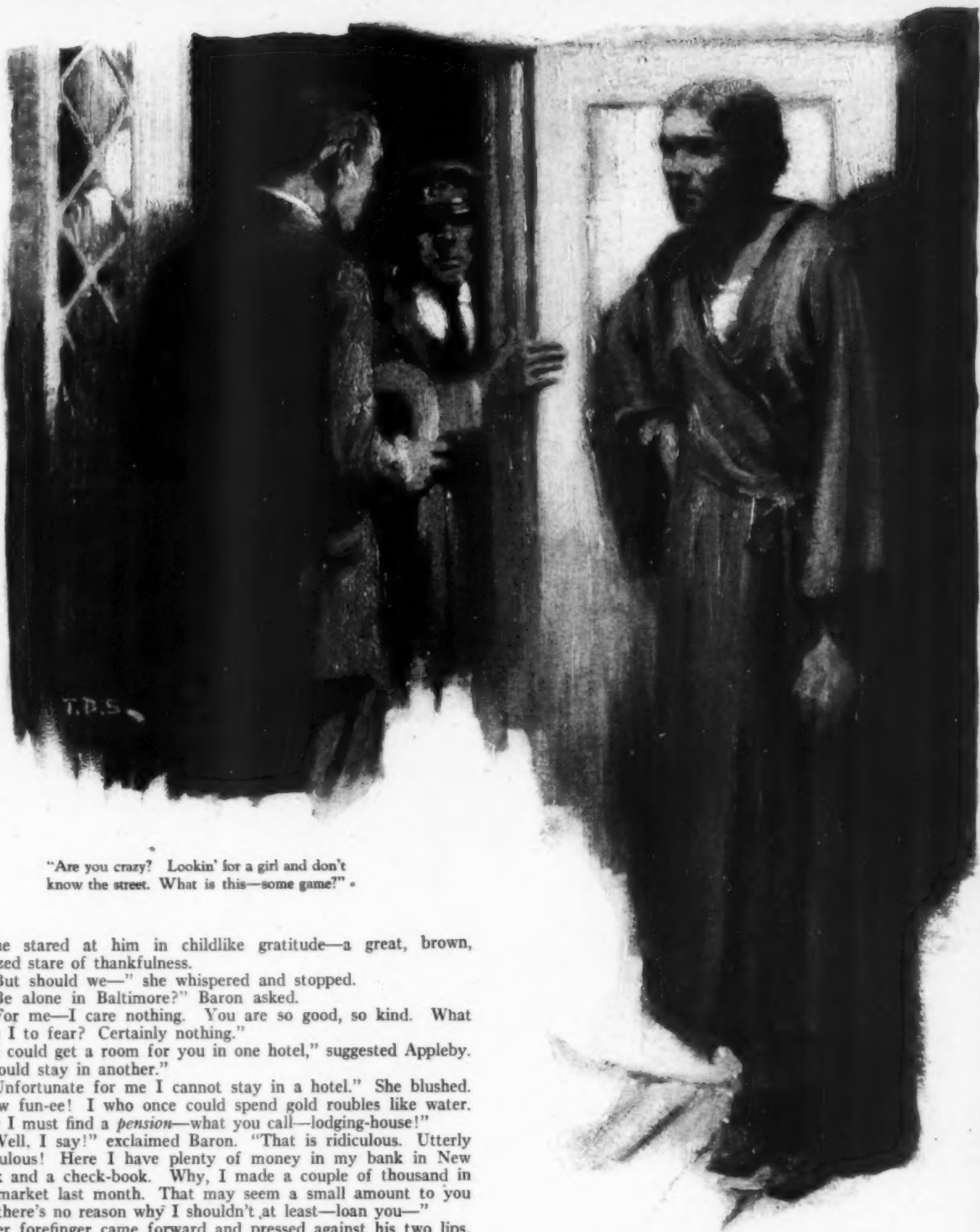
He was overcome. He could feel his heart leap within him. She had given him the final great assurance. Yes, luck had come to him at last!

He looked around to see if other passengers were watching them; then bending down his head, he seized her hands and kissed their fragrant softness again and again.

"But you will let me help you?" he asked eagerly. "I really do not have to be in Washington tomorrow. The government records I want to consult will be there, I guess—even next week. I could act as your representative. I could see your brother-in-law. He, no doubt, would conclude that I was a lawyer. It would frighten him."

"I am so afraid of heem!" she said, trembling. "He knows I am so alone. He has threatened to go to ze consul—to have taken away from me my passport—to tell lies about me! Perhaps you think of me I am one great coward, eh?"

"Certainly not," he replied, gravely. "You'd better let me get off with you in Baltimore. I would do anything gladly for—you."



"Are you crazy? Lookin' for a girl and don't know the street. What is this—some game?"

She stared at him in childlike gratitude—a great, brown, amazed stare of thankfulness.

"But should we—" she whispered and stopped.

"Be alone in Baltimore?" Baron asked.

"For me—I care nothing. You are so good, so kind. What have I to fear? Certainly nothing."

"I could get a room for you in one hotel," suggested Appleby. "I could stay in another."

"Unfortunate for me I cannot stay in a hotel." She blushed. "How fun-ee! I who once could spend gold roubles like water. Now I must find a *pension*—what you call—lodging-house!"

"Well, I say!" exclaimed Baron. "That is ridiculous. Utterly ridiculous! Here I have plenty of money in my bank in New York and a check-book. Why, I made a couple of thousand in the market last month. That may seem a small amount to you but there's no reason why I shouldn't at least—loan you—"

Her forefinger came forward and pressed against his two lips, shut off the words.

"You are vera naughty friend," she said severely. "I have said I would never take one *centime* from you. Not so long as my name iss Olga Abelardi di Vesta!"

"But if the name were changed?"

She bowed her head suddenly as if that suggestion had come with the exhausting force of a great vision.

"Don't do that!" exclaimed Baron almost viciously. "It is all right for violets to bow their heads. But the glorious peony lifts its face to the sun!"

She lifted her face to the sun. It was the late afternoon sun. It was the setting sun. It threw a slanting pink glow that illumined Olga's face. And in that light Baron Appleby thought her face had a superhuman quality, but there was something warmly

human about the tint of her skin. It was white enough but there were olive shades in it and warmth and richness of color. He found himself thinking that if ever she were his—well then, after all, he might tell her to let the Continental cerise of her lips go.

"My *pension*—my lodging house—" she began, as if taking up life anew with fresh hope, courage and pleasant visions.

For a breath he was startled. He wondered if she had knowledge of where she was going. There was the last lingering shred of suspicion that she, after all, was leading him somewhere.

But it was gone at once. She said: "You must help me find it. Wont that be fun-ee! You helping me to find a lodging!"

"It's outrageous!" said he. "We have no way to know the good

places from the bad!" He picked up a Baltimore paper, looking for the "Rooms to Rent."

"We Russian *émigrés* are quite happy now with any place to rest a head," she said with a laugh. "Life is an adventure, eh? Well, then, this iss ze way to find lodgings."

She took a pin from the band of her smart hat and thrust it through the newspaper page.

"Ouch!" exclaimed Appleby. "You've got my thumb."

A tiny drop of blood oozed through the page. Olga gave a little cry.

"Poor boy!" she exclaimed. "I am vera sorr-ee! But let us see where we are going. It is the Destiny! It is our luck!"

She tore out the advertisement pricked with the thrust of the pin.

"God bless you!" Baron exclaimed. "There's no one like you in the whole world! Who ever would have thought of that way to choose a lodging for the night?"

They were coming into Baltimore. Everyone knows the railroad approach to Baltimore. Street after street and block after block and house after house! They all look alike—brick with white-stone trimmings and steps—bits of grass plot. If one is depressed, the acres of similarity suggest that human life has been reduced to a terrible monotony, equality and lack of distinction. But Baron was not depressed. Nor was Olga. She allowed his fingers to close over hers and together they stared out at the roofs of these quantity-production residences—these regiments of houses in blocks—each house like a soldier standing between other soldiers who wore precisely the same uniform. The glow of the late, mild afternoon covered the city with an aura of romance.

"Gad!" exclaimed Appleby. "It is good to be young. How about that, Mona Lisa?"

There was something so helpless and dependent about her. It was charming to find that the glorious exterior of a peony hid the soul of a lily of the valley. She followed him, as he carried the two bags from the station to a taxi, and did not even look up when he gave the rooms-to-rent advertisement to the driver and said, "That's the place." Baron's heart throbbed at her naïve, implicit faith in him.

When after a long bouncing ride they came to a stop, the driver consulted the advertisement again and pointed with his thumb to one of the uniform flights of three white steps which graced the entrances of these houses.

"There's yer number," he said, and put the two dress-suit cases—one black and little and ladylike—one brown and masculine—side by side on the bricks. Baron had so lost his head that he paid the man, tipped him improvidently and allowed him to drive away. That, too, was a piece of his luck.

The narrow ground-glass door of the little house in the middle of the block was opened in answer to the push-button ring by a girl of twenty, who came to the door with sewing still in her hand. Baron remembered little of his first impression of her, except that she was small, delicately cut out, and that somehow one was most attracted by her eyes, which were a deep blue and full of a marked frankness and simplicity.

"I saw your advertisement," he said. "Rooms—a room for—" Olga plucked his elbow as if she thought it not quite good taste to give her name.

"A room—for—my friend," he said, and nodded toward the Countess.

"Oh, I'm afraid—" began the other in a voice noticeably pleasant and tinged with the suggestion of well-bred Southerners.

"It's quite all right," Baron hastened to say. "I am not looking for accommodations for myself."



"But that isn't it," the girl explained. "It's because I am all alone here. I hardly know how to tell you. Well, come in—I didn't mean to keep you standing there."

She showed the way into a tiny parlor, almost painfully clean. But Baron could see that humble as it was it had the flavor of a family of quality. A steel engraving of a Confederate officer, with his hand thrust under one edge of his great coat, overlooked the room from above the black-marble clock on the mantel and filled the place with his noble, calm stare. There were haircloth rocking-chairs and a Colonial sofa with tidies and the faint aroma of lavender.

"I am Miss Alice Featherday," said the girl.

"And my name is Appleby," replied Baron, bowing. "And this is the Countess Abelardi. She wanted to be quiet; she does not care for hotels."

"Oh!" said Miss Featherday, smiling, and then suddenly the look of doubt came back into her face.

"You see I live with my grandmother—my mother's mother," she explained. "We just moved here from the South. We are rather poor and I suggested that advertisement because we never use the front room just above this and it's really a pretty room. But yesterday, Jennie—Jennie's our maid, we brought up from Virginia last fall—began to have dizzy spells and all we could do would not persuade her from going back to Winchester to her folks and, of course, Grandmother had to go with her. So you see!"

"Think of it! A whole trainload of men, and that woman picked me out! But then—I never have any luck!"



T.D.S.

"Certainlee," said Olga. "What a pity! But nevairtheless, what can I do? Here iss my luggage. Ze taxi have gone. Zis gentleman have been vera—vera kind. Maybe—you, too—will be so kind."

Miss Featherday bit her lip. "Why, I really know so little about it. We never rented a room before. If my grandmother were here, she would know."

She turned from the Countess and looked appealingly into Appleby's eyes.

"Oh, that will be all right," he said to her in a fatherly way. He enjoyed being trusted. "We can arrange it, I am sure."

For a moment the Southern girl looked at the Russian, still hesitant, still feeling some question about this brilliant European product. She looked at her as a modest song-bird might regard a bird of paradise.

"Well, then," she said at last. "I will show you the room. And if you want it by the day you can fix the price yourself." She laughed. "I reckon I'm not much of a business woman."

The room like the parlor below was as neat as a pin. Miss Featherday, however, was embarrassed. She said: "I'll just go downstairs and let you talk about it with—with Mr. Appleby. Perhaps you will not like it."

"Oh, eet iss lovely!" protested Olga, but when she was alone with Baron she shrugged her broad shoulders.

"I will stay here, my friend," she said to him. "I will wait here for you, eh?"

"Wait?"

"Yes, you—have I not tell you—you moost go to ze hotel. You moost look on ze book—ze register—for ze name of Leone di Abeldardi—zis terrible brother-in-law."

"I could telephone."

"There iss no telephone here," said Olga. "But beside, Leone moost not know we are asking for heem. I moost know if he iss here. And then—"

"Yes—and then—"


"Then I will tell you what to do next."

"But, Olga—"

"Please! Do not waste theese minutes," she said. "I am vera nervous. And I want you to go and (Continued on page 152)"

By
Rupert
Hughes

HERETOFORE Mr. Hughes has engaged his lively interest in half a dozen things at the same time; but these days in his lovely California house amid its trees on one of the most beautiful of Hollywood's hills he is so engrossed in the completion of the present novel that nothing else is in his mind; he writes. His joy in the task is reflected in the sympathy that pervades the story.



The OLD Home Town

Illustrated by Will Foster

The Story So Far:

A QUIET Midwestern town, usually. So the murder of the Martling family by a mysterious ax-wielder had for many weeks furnished ample theme for conversation. So too the trial of Jere Haden, a small politician accused of that murder, was an event of first importance. And thus it happened that Loren Brown, editor of the local newspaper, found himself for once with all too much news to "cover" when he learned that on the day the Haden trial opened, the wedding of Eliza Lail was to occur at the house of her aunt Mrs. Budlong, the self-elected social arbiter of Carthage.

Brown made the mistake of deciding that the wedding was more important than the preliminaries of the trial. He had just drunk a toast to the bride when he was called to the telephone and informed that partisans of Jere Haden had staged a small riot in the courtroom, and that some one had shot and mortally wounded Nelson Webb, the substitute prosecuting attorney. Ignorant or forgetful that Mrs. Webb and her children were among the guests, Brown made his excuses to Mrs. Budlong and an-

nounced the tragedy. Mrs. Webb hurried home with her brood to bid farewell to her dying husband—and a little later certain of the townsfolk saved further legal expense by lynching Jere Haden.

A posthumous love-letter in the form of an insurance policy enabled Mrs. Webb to get along somehow, and in a few years the oldest boy Ben was able to help with his earnings. All through these years Ben from afar worshiped Odalea Lail, who had been a flower-girl at the wedding the day his father was shot. He was working as a machinist at the railroad station when he saw Odalea, coming home from college, alight from the train in the company of his boyhood enemy, her cousin Ulysses Budlong, and his old flame revived. And when that fall "Ulie" went back to college while Odalea stayed home, opportunity came to Ben Webb—strangely.

For Ben was summoned to mend the run-down Lail furnace, and while seeking to make life more comfortable for his adored Odalea, he hit upon a device for automatic water-heating that

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The horses fairly soared back to the road, and safety. Beneath Odalea's fingers Ben's muscles had turned to lumps of granite and shilting steel.

"Well, in this poem, Lowell speaks of a shepherd driving a flock of sheep along a dusty road; and they go clattering across a bridge and then into the dust again. And he says it's like human life: 'a little noise between two silences.'"

"Humph! Nice!" was all Ben had to say, but it recorded a vast amount of bafflement.

Much virtue in a "humph!" And your "nice" is a poet's neatest praise.

What other words or philosophies are more important as comments on the brevity of life and the vast incalculable deaths before and after it, the short and tumultuous covered bridge we trouble with our little racket?

The whole world seemed to be concerned with the same thought. The sunlight whipped the hills with a rain of fire and flickered the surfaces of the poplar leaves in green lightnings; but the wind kept fluttering up their silver linings with an effect of glances of fear. The shining streams fled from something; they darted under swinging branches to hide, or scampered among the gilded sand-bars as if pursued or pursuing.

Overhead in the blue pastures of the sky, flocks of fleece were in alarm; they huddled together or broke up into scattered stampedes, tremendously beautiful yet somehow afraid of a wind that must be swifter up there than the light gales on the earth.

Was it the same world-terror that made the horses give their utmost to the play of every muscle? They spurned the road as if they would beat back the dust they came from and must return to; they reared and swerved, slashed their tails, arched their necks and kept their nostrils snorting in a fury of existence.

Odalea was still in the schoolgirl period, when one is permitted to feel poetry shamelessly and to quote it without modesty. She was soon quoting again:

"And you remember Shakespeare said: 'Golden lads and girls all must, Like chimney-sweepers, come to dust.'"

seemed likely to win him fortune. Odalea rewarded his successful experiment in her own house by going buggy-riding with him in the accepted form which the automobile was just beginning to displace. (The story continues in detail:)

INSIDE the covered bridge the footbeats of the horses had been multiplied by reverberation into the trample of gigantic steeds; and the wheels were the wheels of an iron chariot. The moment they emerged to the open outer road, the uproar died.

And that reminded Odalea of something she had read in her English class at school.

"Did you notice, Ben," she said, "how quiet the horses' hoofs were before we drove onto the bridge and how quiet they are again?"

"Now that you speak of it, yes. It's the dust, I guess."

"It reminds me of James Russell Lowell's poem, 'The Rain.' Ever read it?"

"If it's poetry, it's safe to say no. My brother Guido gets in the poetry for our family."

"Did he? Well, I guess he got it right, at that," was the farthest from prose that Ben could reach. Apparently Odalea did not expect poetry from men, and was not discouraged from brooding on aloud:

"Think of it, Ben, this dust we breathe and brush off our sleeves—it was people once! Indians or pioneers—or panthers or buffaloes—or flowers, anyway. Oh, Ben, why must we live such a little while and stay so long dead?"

"You can search me, honey."

He was no phrase-maker, but he felt as deep as anyone. And he put in the "honey" for comradeship. They leaned together a little closer, forlorn castaways in a lifeboat, finding some comfort in the touch of shoulder.

The road turned north along the eastern bank of the river. Here and there it was hidden by clustered trees; here and there it came forth visible in the breadth of a lake.

On the high bluffs opposite, the town of Carthage clung, and ptered out gradually into forests of primeval look. Along the foot of the bluffs the railroad track skirted the water's edge and a passenger train sped south, with a distant rumble, its bell pulsing like a brazen heart.

Like a terrified python the train raced past the awkwardly waddling enormous goose of the packet boat that had held Ben and Odalea on the bridge. It was already released from the lock and swimming northward through the canal.

AS the train scorned the boat, the horses passed with equal superiority a pair of blowzy tramps, mere human trundlebugs laboriously fleeing from honest toil.

"Here we all go!" Ben said. "We don't know where; but we're on our way. Those hoboes leggin' it south; us in our horse-and-buggy; that fat old boat smackin' the water; and the railroad train licketty-splittin' like all get-out; and the old world rollin' down the long bowling alley till she hits a tenpin somewhere and goes to smash. And nobody knows what it's all about or where we go from where. Well, anyways, I'm havin' a good time."

Odalea felt that she must say:

"Me, too! It's beautiful out here today."

He pointed with his whip to the center of the river where black shoulders of rocks broke the current into white water.

"See how shallow the water is there on the shoals. I waded all the way across the river once, except for about thirty feet where it was over my head and I had to swim. I came out just about here that time. But once when I swam all the way across, I started from the canal-rip right over there; and while I kept headin' upstream and swam as hard as I could, I landed a mile below. That shows you how swift that old current is.

"Life's that way, too. You do your darndest and swim your hardest and you land a mile below where you aimed at. Then the critics stand on the bank and when you come out blowin' and puffin' and exhausted, they laugh at you and point out how far you missed it. As if you didn't know it a blamed sight better and sooner than they did!

"Funny thing, too, about wadin' in that old river. You can walk along breast high and feel the rocks underfoot, but you can't stand still for a second. You don't feel anything pushin' you, but you just can't stop."

"Life's like that, too," sighed Odalea, who was in a young ardor of meditation upon the most futile solemnities of the futility called life. She was rescued from further inept wisdom by their arrival opposite a point of land that wedged far out into the stream.

"There's those three trees!" she cried. "I call them the Three Graces. From Carthage, they look as if they were standing out in the water knee-deep. It always surprises me when I drive out here and see that they are well up on the bank."

This reverted Ben to sullenness. There she was again with her reminiscences of previous excursions with previous lovers! The unpardonable sin in sweethearts is reminiscence. Why can't they be born anew for each love-affair and come into it with no more memory of their pasts than an infant brings in from the outer world?

Ben set his whip back into its socket and let the horses jog as dully as his feelings went. Odalea felt his retraction from her shoulder and from her cordial mood, but could not imagine what she had said to offend him. She had known other suitors to shrink into their shells mysteriously, but had never compared the occasions and learned the rule.

She had found, however, that if she let them alone the sun came out of the clouds by and by as if there had been no eclipse at all.

Henceforward the road grew more rugged, climbing far above the river. It was narrow and kept in ill repair from the water that pitched down the hillside to which the roadway clung. At the outer verge was a wooded precipice, which ended in sharp rocks, the water slapping them with ill temper.

IT was a bad place for horses to misbehave, and a ticklish place to encounter another team. So they encountered another team and the horses misbehaved.

There had been a Sunday-school picnic in a grove above, and the crowds were returning, in haste to reach Carthage before nightfall.

The only men in the party were the drivers of the omnibuses. The fathers had stayed at home in their stores and offices; and the mothers and Sunday-school teachers were worn out with caring for the youth all day, amusing them and feeding them.

But the boys and girls were drunk on life, and song was their safety valve. They shrieked with laughter for no reason at all and howled old songs with a ferocity that sounded like abuse to the horses, more used to curses than song.

The first of the picnic-omnibuses passed Ben and Odalea at a point where there was room to turn into a niche of the hill and give the choir the whole road.

The horses danced a bit and expressed a willingness to whirl and follow their stable-companions back to town. But Ben laughed and drove them on, and the wagonload of turmoil passed out of sight and hearing around a lower curve. Ben laughed:

"Those poor fool livery-stable horses! You can't whip 'em away from home and you can't hold 'em on the way back. They haven't got much to look forward to when they get to the stable—nothing more than an old stall and the chance to hunt for an oat they missed. But home's home, I guess, to man and beast."

In a moment another bus confronted them: the horses on the lope, the driver hanging back and dragging at the lines, the children in a pandemonium of singing and laughter.

To escape the rush of the deafening avalanche, Ben had to send his team so far up on the shelving bank that Odalea would have pitched out sideways if she had not flung her arms about him; and he would have slid out on top of her, if he had not thrust his knee out over the uprisen floor of the buggy.

He escaped capsizing only by snapping the lines at the horses and driving them down into the road at speed enough to right the buggy before it could overturn. But this carried his team to the left edge of the road; and before he could return to the other side, a third omnibus charged round a ledge of rock. And the passengers in this whooping Juggernaut were flogging the galloping horses with their explosive rendition of still another ancient ditty.

The driver of this bus was as busy as a fisherman who has hooked two leaping tarpon. When he suddenly caught sight of Ben and his girl on the left side of the road and unable to make the crossing, he had the Hobson's choice of adding a second wrong to make one right.

He stood up, seized the inner lines as far forward as he could reach, fell back with all his weight, and managed to yank his hard-mouthed horses into the hillside.

He got his team past Ben's team without knocking it over into the river; but after the horses came the long wagon with its ear-splitting hullabaloo. Some of the children leaned out to shriek and wave at the frantic horses Ben was trying to control, with only two long leathern ribbons.

Chapter Fourteen

THE wheels of the bus skidded across the ruts, bombarding Ben's horses with clods, and narrowly escaping the smashing of the light fellows of the buggy. Ben's team grew maniac with confusion. The ground under their feet crumbled and only the thick roots of a tree or two slanting out from the cliff saved them from dropping into the river.

The buggy swung backward over the edge, ready to fall and drag the horses down upon what the rocks below should leave of the broken bodies of Ben and Odalea.

The girl, casting one glance of horror at the surly river gnashing the sharp rocks far beneath, closed her eyes upon the life whose brevity of beauty she had bewailed.

She opened them again to see what Ben was making of his last chance. She found him busy with the calm swiftness of a good mechanic in a crisis, making dextrous use of all his tools in precise succession.



He clenched her and beat her lips with his own as if they were hammer and anvil.

He shot his hand out to the whip, wrenched it from the socket, flung it back and brought it down across the back and side of the off-horse with the slash of a scimitar; raised it and brought it down on the nigh-horse with another scouring cut that whistled in the air and bit like fire. To the command of the whip he added the full power of his lungs in a ferocious yell.

The pain and the surprise and the terror were as wings to the horses, and they fairly soared back to the road, and safety.

When in their frenzy they reared and twisted and would have bolted, he sent them into the clay bank.

When they began to kick and swerve and lunge backward, he gave them the whip again. And he wrung their mouths with alternate jerks on the lines until they were so distraught that they abandoned volition and stood quivering in abject surrender.

For all her own panic, Odalea could not but wonder at the arm she clung to with both her desperate hands. Beneath her clawing fingers Ben's muscles had turned to lumps of granite and shifting steel.

When the horses were so meek that they were content to jog along the road with downcast heads and panting sides, Ben emitted one low chuckle of satisfaction. He simply said:

"Ha!"

If he had only known it, he could have turned and claimed Odalea on any terms. She would have married him for the mere asking. She sat as humble as a beggar in the presence of a king, and regarded with awe the divine being in whose car of triumph she was permitted to ride.

After a time, Ben spoke again.

"Well! It's better up here than it might 'a' been down there."

She marveled again at a man of so much resource in action and so little in language. But she liked him the better for that poverty.

The road drifted soon to the level and ran again among meadows and amiable thickets with the river loafing along soft edges of sand. Odalea had leisure now for a luxury of fright, and she pleaded:

"If you don't mind, I'd like to get out for a few minutes, just to feel the dear old earth under my feet again."

So Ben drove to the water's edge and reined in under a tree from whose branches the horses plucked the leaves greedily. They were glad perhaps to have one more chance at the good things of earth.

Ben helped Odalea down, released the tight check-reins and fastened the horses. This was a gratuitous flattery. They had had their fill of running away for one afternoon, and were apparently satisfied to keep company with the genius who had rescued them from self-destruction.

He was their god for that day, an incomprehensible deity who could wield a whip of lightning with a voice of thunder, and compel them through great terrors to their own redemption.

When he paused to pat their sweaty necks, they paid him the equine homage of bunting him with their grateful noses. And when he loosened their moorings, so that they might reach down and skim the cream off the tall blue-grass, they whinnied what was perhaps their Twenty-third Psalm.

After he had comforted the horses with his benediction, Ben turned to find that Odalea had dropped to the ground under the swooping branches of a great tree trailing its leaves in the eddies of the river where it curled round into a still inlet. Her knees had given way beneath her and her heart was whipping her throat where it glowed at the V of her frock.

By her side Ben crouched and could think of nothing more idyllic than to pull a lush stalk of timothy from its sleek socket and hold it between his teeth.



As he escorted the queen of his heart to her room, they caught a glimpse of Petunia, asleep.

She was so humbled and bent her head so low that the white nape of her neck was an arc of beauty before him. For all his taciturnity he was so proud of his victory over the wild horses and imminent death that he felt emboldened to lean forward and tickle her with the timothy-wand he held between his teeth.

It was just such a caress as one of the shepherds of Theocritus would have ventured upon a Sicilian shepherdess, but Odalea, still shaken with fear, thought a spider had attacked her, winced and cried out and clutched so wildly that he was afraid to confess his guilt or to laugh at her fright.

Finding that she was not bitten, she glanced about and caught him in the act of hiding his weapon of grass. It was all so silly and so appropriately silly that she laughed aloud. And that permitted him to laugh; and that made her laugh more; and this made him laugh more.

After all, they were no more foolish than the gods on Olympus laughing at their limping waiter, and their laughter was no less ambrosial.

It is silly for young couples not to be silly when they have



the chance, and these two were wise enough to be sublimely idiotic for no reason at all or for a better reason than any reason.

The laughter left them in a mood of amorous yearning, and the sun, bending to the western horizon, made the air one rose of tender splendor.

But Odalea was still so imbued with literary news that everything poetic must have a bookish authority, and she must try to dignify a mood more ancient than any verse. She must quote the quatrains of the old Persian poet who had slept in his tent for nearly a thousand years, only to be dragged out by an Englishman and made so universally popular that his cynical epigrams were

now household words in a whole continent of which he had never heard.

Ben Webb was one of the few Americans who was still capable of amazement at the jaded beauty of Omar's *rubai* which Odalea rehearsed:

"If I'd only brought along a volume of poetry we'd be in Paradise," she sighed. "You remember:

"A book of verses underneath the bough—"

"No, what about it?"

She recited all four lines and he was so enthralled by the wording and by the compliment he took to himself, that he startled himself by recalling a rhyme.

"I said I didn't know any poetry. But you shook some out of my old bean. Do you remember what James Whitcomb Riley wrote?"

Odalea shook her head in scorn of the Theocritus of Indianapolis, and Ben explained:

"Lookin' at the way the river is all kind of dappled with the shade of the leaves there, I was reminded of something Riley wrote I read somewhere. It must have stuck in my crop somehow. It's something about a tree hanging over a crick and it says:

"Sun and shadder all so mixed,
Don't know if you'd orter
Say 'The worter in the shadder
Or the shadder in the worter.'"

This surprised Odalea with its rippling limpidity and she made him say it over and over until she had memorized it and could gurgel it in a liquid sweetness.

"To think of you teaching me poetry!" she gasped.

A thought scurried through Ben's brain as a bird scoots across a road, and takes quick cover. It was something about Odalea being herself a poem and able to inspire even a plumber to poetry. If such an idea had flashed through Guido's brain he would have captured it and put it on paper. Even if Guido had thought of it in a girl's presence he would have hesitated to waste it on an audience of only one, and would either have saved it till he got home, or spoken it and made a mental note to write it down later.

But it was so unheard of for Ben to be visited by a figure of speech that he recoiled from it with the terror of a young huntsman scaring up a plover and trembling as it whirs from beneath his feet.

The inspiration vanished, leaving him blushing with embarrassment and pleading:

"Don't you tell Guido on me, or he'll never let up on me."

Odalea studied him with the tender wonder a woman feels for a man whose emotion is too big for his vocabulary. And again he might have taken her in his arms. But he was not yet wrought to such recklessness. And they sat a long while as young lovers do, wasting precious moments in a dumb duet, mutually unheard, of, "Why doesn't he try?" and, "What would she do if I did?"

At length, seeing that Ben was not likely to move for hours and hours, Odalea said:

"Look, how low the sun is. We'd better be starting back."

"Aw, no!" Ben groaned. "Back is a place we can always start for. We don't know if there'll ever be another afternoon like this. There's a little grocery store up the road a piece. What would you say to buying it out and makin' up a little supper to eat right here in the woods by the river?"

"All right!"

THEY ran to the buggy and were soon at the hitching-post of the general store, where the forlorn proprietor had an almost complete stock of things he was "just out of."

But they made up a basketful of incongruities and drove back to the inlet. Odalea spread the lap robe for a cloth, and Ben opened the bags and cans and jars and set the table.

There was a sack of old soda crackers; *item*, a sack of potato chips; *item*, a wedge of fresh yellow cheese; *item*, a can of chipped beef, a tin of sardines, a jar of olives, a bag of peanuts, a slab of honey, and finally, two bottles of pop—well named, too, for when they were opened, the horses almost climbed the tree they were tied to.

The honey was in its waxen comb in a little pine casement between two plates of glass—a window of honey.

Odalea used the glass for a mirror surreptitiously, and for excuse pretended to marvel at the architecture of the bees, and the stories she had read of their progress in the arts of government. Ben, the practical, brought the rhapsody home:

"Bees are about as clever as any other labor union, but they are always working for somebody else. They're clever, but men are clever, too. That box was made by men and set up where the bees would fill it. As like as not, men made the comb too—of raffin, to save wastin' the time of the bees.

"Men are great folks for gettin' other men and animals, insects and everything to workin' for them.

"Look at that river out there! It's been runnin' down a steep hill for Lord knows how long, and wastin' enough power to blamed near run the world. When we build the dam, a city will grow up there where Carthage has been just sittin' and waitin'

for something to happen. The river will just go on about its business, but people will have more time to rest and more money to spend on pretty things. We'll all be millionaires when the dam is built."

"But to spoil such beauty as this!" she sighed, gazing at the living elegy of the twilight: the slow and mournful departure of color from the crimson sky, the deep gloaming of the darkening hills, the river running all Burgundy, but turning to black wine.

"There'll be more beauty than ever!" Ben insisted. "Where this river goes now along the bed of rocks, there'll be an enormous lake sixty miles long, and sailboats on it, and gardens along the shore."

"And you think we'll live to see it?"

"We've got to. And I hope we see it to—together—together."

THIS frightful audacity came out of his throat at last like a cork, and it released the imprisoned speech that had lain as still as champagne in an ancient bottle. It came gushing, effervescent, stinging, with a sweetness full of needles, a dizzying exhilaration.

With no further parley, no hemming and hawing, Ben was astounded to see his own hands laying hold upon Odalea, while he heard his runaway voice galloping through phrases utterly foreign to it:

"That's it, honey. We've got to live to see it together. We can't watch it from here, because this place will be buried fifty feet beneath the level of the lake. But we can watch it maybe from a yacht of our own or something.

"For by that time, I'll have a lot of money made. As soon as they start the dam they'll need a lot of mechanics and they'll need me. I don't mean to brag but I know my trade—God knows I ought to, seeing as I've spent all my boyhood at it, and all the fun young folks are supposed to have. But I'll get an important position, you'll see. And I've got ideas, too, if I do say it as oughtn't. But little tricks and mechanical ideas come to me the way lines of poetry come to Guido. When the old brain is working at a problem, my head's as full of music as Petunia's is. My inventions are ugly, practical old things, instead of songs and poems, but they mean the same to me.

"But the thing that makes 'em mean most to me is the feeling that I'm workin' for you. You ought to have a king for a husband and do nothing but sit on a cushion and eat peaches and cream. But kings don't get out this way, and the biggest folks that do are pretty small potatoes.

"Well, if I can make a lot of money I can buy you heaps of things, fine clothes, a carriage, or an automobile, a yacht, any darn thing.

"You can't imagine how long I've been lovin' you or how much. The thing that used to make me so bad as a boy was because I couldn't seem to get a smile out of you. I'd hang around and stare at you and try to get the nerve to go up and speak to you, ask you to let me carry your books home from school, or tighten your skates when you were out on the canal in winter, or do your sums for you when I saw you tanglin' your brows up over your slate.

"But I was afraid of you, and you looked so clean and pretty, and I was so mused up and grimy, and—oh, I'd go almost mad, and just to show I wasn't a coward I'd sass the teacher, or bunt the biggest boy in school off the sidewalk. But it was all for you—even then, and every minute since.

"And now you know it! And what about it? Is there any hope of your ever liking me well enough to let me work for you? Or ought I to just go down and jump in the river and say, here goes nothin'? Huh, what about it?"

This gust of love had sent Odalea's wits all in a whirl. She heard him through with her brows frowning from perplexity and her lips smiling with amusement and with no little delight as well.

The speechless man had been for once a torrent, and it was now the garrulous young woman who was at a loss for words. The best she could do was to mumble:

"Well—I shouldn't like to see you jump in the river—"

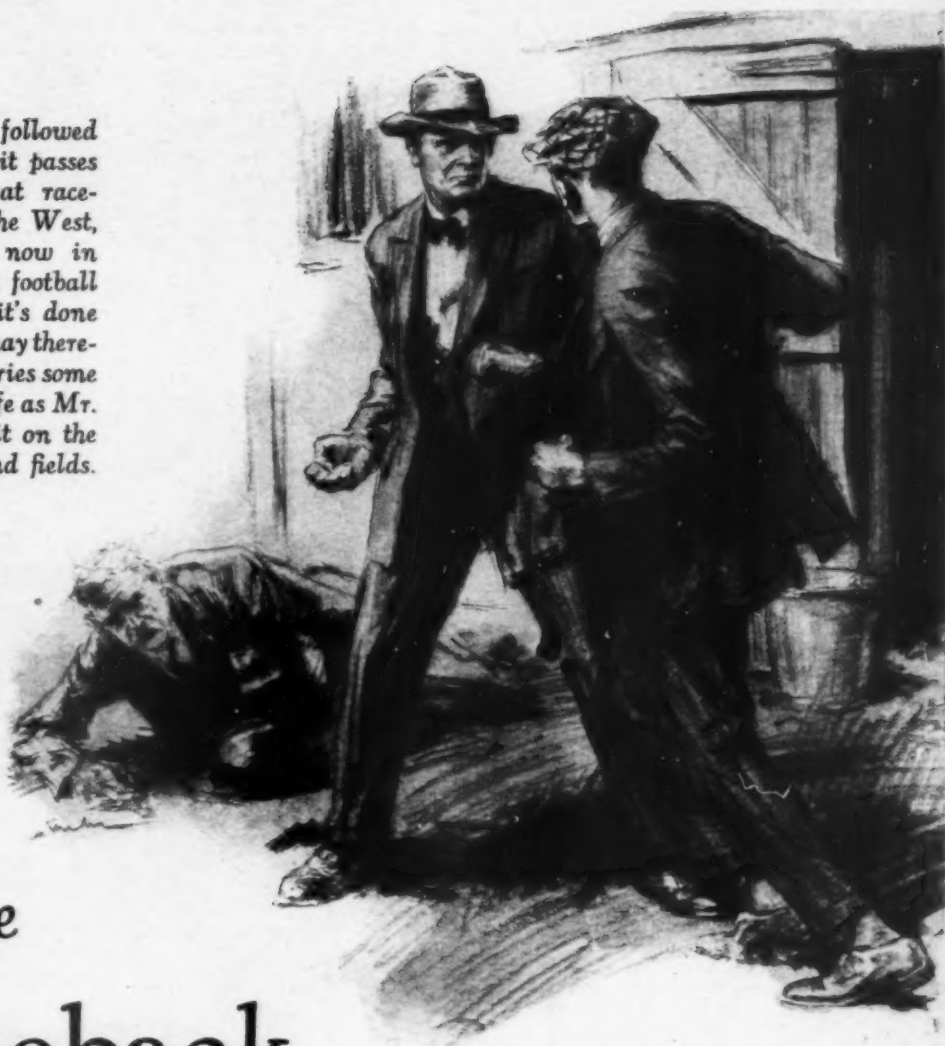
That was all he wanted. With a wail of bliss, he seized her and dragged her into his bosom and clenched her madly and beat her lips with his own as if they were hammer and anvil.

Smothered and hurt, rumped and dismayed, she was still not quite angry. She made a faint effort or two at escape for the sake of the record, and then gave up and sank back into his arms.

For this consummation of his lifelong yearning, he was dumbly unprepared. All his words were out (Continued on page 126)

HAVING for years followed the parade of sport as it passes up and down the great race-tracks and stadia of the West, Gerald Beaumont is now in the East following the football game, and racing as it's done at Saratoga. Readers may therefore expect in future stories some reflection of sporting life as Mr. Beaumont has found it on the older Eastern tracks and fields.

Illustrated
by
Ernest Fuhr



The Kid, fainting prettily, waited for his heavy opponent.

The Comeback of Lady Courageous

By Gerald Beaumont

"PRAISE be to Allah, the Beneficent King, Prince of Light, and Lord of the Three Worlds! Blessings on Thy Family and Companion Train! O Sultan, it has reached my ears—"

The Information Kid was off again, deep in the pages of his beloved "Arabian Nights," and oblivious of all else, even the young spring moon that bathed the old Latonia track in silver. His slim form reposed on a cot in the tackle-room of old Sandy McKee, but in spirit he was following the romance of the Queen of the Shadow Isles, as outlined in the fields of fancy that he loved so well.

It was always so in April when the Kid came to Latonia. Elsewhere and at other seasons, he could be unbelievably hard-headed and cynical—the wisest young commissioner on the turf. But when spring dawned and Kentucky called, and the sap stirred in all living things, the Information Kid's gray eyes grew soft and

dreamy, and a sixth sense was added to his faculties. He saw things concealed from others and touched hidden chords of sympathy reserved for him alone. It was as though a mystic Voice whispered its commands and he answered: "I hear and I obey!"

He had arrived that morning, pert and chipper, blowing into his old stamping ground with the cheerful salutation: "You may lift the barrier, boys—I am here!"

Pals gave him a royal welcome. The old gang was on hand to grab his hand and wish him luck: Henry the Rat, Frenchy Bonville, Sunday School John, and all the others. Not a familiar face was missing.

"Yea, boy!" exulted the young king of the hustlers. "God's in His heaven, and the world is jake!"

And it really seemed that way, for what can equal the charm of Old Kentuck' when Dame Nature dons her vernal colors and

trumpets softly the call
to young hot blood?
Small wonder that the
Information Kid, wistful
gypsy of the thorough-
bred trails, should turn
at nightfall for commun-
ion with the ancient
scribe who wrote:

List, O my friends, unto a
tale of Love,
And God forbid that I
should speak and
That thy heart to hearken
should not deign.
As 'twere Allah Himself,
of passion I discourse
With fancies rare and
marvelous,
Like an endless chain!

The Information Kid
read on, until the young
moon waned, and the
tiny stable lamp began to
flicker protestingly. He
closed the book with a
sigh, extinguished the
light, and lay there in the
darkness, with only the
glow of a cigarette to
show that he was still
awake. Sentimental memories engulfed him,
and because his life had been singularly free
of women, his thoughts turned to his equine
sweethearts, all royal princesses of the turf,
unbroken in lineage from the days of Solomon.

There had been Susanna the Golden; Dawn
o' Virginia; Hazel Gale; the pride of Poverty
Row; Viva Reina, who died leading her field
home in the International Derby and was
buried on the field of honor; and finally, Lady
Courageous, the "lil' old red stockings" of
Sandy McKee's stable. Ah, *there* was the
Kid's first sweetheart, and the choicest flower
in his heart's bouquet!

How well he remembered her last appearance on the
turf! It was in the Pennington Handicap at Latonia
when the great St. Ivan was an overwhelming choice in
the betting. Sandy McKee, a year before, had bought
Lady Courageous at auction for seventeen hundred
dollars and a battered silver watch. She was believed
to be a hopeless cripple, but the Scotchman had nursed
her tenderly and brought her back to run in bandages
against the pick of the world. And the Information
Kid, obeying one of his hunches, had strung with Sandy.

That was the day St. Ivan went out in front at the
first turn and all the way down the back-stretch was
apparently ten lengths in front of everything. Not until the big
black horse made the turn for home, did the vast crowd discover
that he was not alone. Running right at his shoulder and hidden
from view, a little bay mare had been measuring St. Ivan stride
for stride.

The Kid could see her now as she swung into the stretch for
the run home, the red bandages flashing in the sunlight, and old
Sandy McKee sobbing above the din: "There she comes! There's
my lil' ol' red stockings! There she comes!"

And then the finish: with the Lady in front by a head on the
post, and a new track record for the world to shoot at!

Now she was retired from the turf, and in her place had come
a daughter, Tucky Bells, slim and fervent-eyed. The Informa-
tion Kid could hear the nervous little filly stamping restlessly
in the adjoining stall. Tucky Bells was a joy to the eye, but it
was the mother that held first place in the hustler's heart. And
"lil' ol' red stockings" had shed her racing bandages and was
browsing knee-deep in pleasant pastures.



Cradled in the lap of reverie, the Information Kid dozed off,
dreaming of the Vizier's youngest daughter and the magic herbs
that were brewed by a Jinni in her behalf. And while he lay
asleep, and outside the young moon faded from the heavens,
Allah the Most High, the All-Powerful (May His Light increase!)
took cognizance of his slumbering servant and began the story of
the return of Lady Courageous.

Understand, there are horses and horses, but the gallant daugh-
ter of Lord Valor and True Blue was a "mare in a million." Delicately constructed as became her royal lineage, what she lacked
in stature, she made up in the deep bosom that bespoke a large
heart and unusual lung capacity. Her skin was the true bay, em-
blem of speed and endurance, and in her velvet eyes was the ruby
glint of ancient fires.

It so happened that this high-strung princess of the turf had
been grossly mismanaged in her youth. As a three-year-old, in
the hands of Jake Mantor, she broke down and would never have
faced the barrier again had it not been for sentimental Sandy

McKee
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Whitewashed wood
parted like tissue paper
and a bay filly toppled
over in a somersault.

more wistful and tender, and he took to consoling her with promises that he did not expect to keep.

"Noo, noo," he would say, "you maun na fuss like that! You maun na tempt me, old lass! Next spring, I'll take you. Next spring! Good-by, lil' ol' red stockings. Take care o' yourself. . . . Vera weel, boys, load 'em up!"

But if the annual parting brought its regrets to Sandy McKee, the shock to Lady Courageous was even more tragic. The gallant mare could never understand why she was not permitted to go. Every spring equine intelligence correctly interpreted the hustle and bustle that preceded the departure. She knew all the symptoms by heart: the resurrection of tackle boxes and battered trunks, the airing of blankets and the smell of oil on new leather; the happy songs of the stable-hands and the crooning voice of Snowball:

Goin' to the track wif my hat caved
in,
Comin' back home wif my pocket
full o' tin,
Doodah . . . oh, doodah! . . .

And Lady Courageous, peering from the half-door of her stall, alternately hopeful and despairing, watched these preparations

McKee, an old Scotchman with a hard head and a very soft heart. Their romance was a story in itself and it climaxed gloriously on that day at Latonia of which we have spoken.

"I'll never ask to run her again," said Sandy. "That little mare has done all that I could expect."

So, he retired her to the old Pennington Farm down Lexington way, mated her with the great horse War Cry, and established her as queen of his equine household. Her first colt did not live, and then came—as if in compensation—Tucky Bells, as cute a little filly as ever kicked up its heels in a Kentucky meadow.

Old Snowball used to say: "Tucky Bells gonna ring out sweet music some day. Yassuh, boss—she gonna bus' all the watches in the country!"

To which Sandy McKee would gravely reply: "If she's half as good as her mother, I'll be vera weel satisfied."

His heart, you see, was always with Lady Courageous, and it hurt him to have to leave her behind each spring when the day came to ship others to Latonia. Each year his farewell grew

with large eyes and distended nostrils. It was the annual call to the colors, and with all the ardor of a gallant Amazon she yearned to lead that parade of horses down the shaded lane that led to the railroad station.

But for three seasons now she had played the rôle of the girl they left behind them. Once she had escaped from her stall long enough to follow them down the lane, pleading with whimpering whinnies and soft nickering to be taken along. Little Bubbles Jackson, knee high to an ink-pot, had been ordered to lead her back, and he had sobbed all the way home, wailing aloud: "Jes' you wait, Lady! Us is gwine poison every fool goat Marse McKee's got, and den he'll jes' natcher'llly have to let you do yo' stuff! Wait and see, Lady! Ah's got a powerful hunch that one o' these faih days us'll swing round th' ol' stretch again, and ah'll jes' natcher'llly lambast hell out o' you! How y'all like the prospect, Lady?"

For answer, the mare nuzzled him affectionately, and the little negro dried his eyes. "Bein' a mother aint hurt you none," he

told her. "No suh, Lady—aint hurt you a-tall! An' if Boss don't wait too long, us'll sure give the worl' a s'prise pahty!"

But, alas for the good intentions of Sandy McKee! The surprise party was long in coming—so long, in fact, that Lady Courageous abandoned hope. The fire died from her eyes; the shapely form grew high in flesh and logy; and the time even came when she could watch the departing file of horses apathetically and without exacting from Sandy McKee his customary promise of "Next spring, lass—next spring, sure!"

She was apparently content to browse knee-deep in the meadow land and dream of the days that were gone forever.

NO Scotchman wears his heart on his sleeve and Sandy McKee succeeded in concealing from all men, save the Information Kid, the deep sentiment that was so much a part of his make-up. Sandy was sincere in his determination that Lady Courageous should rest upon her laurels.

"Not that she couldn't come right back and beat any horse in the world," he proclaimed to all who would listen. "But there's no need. They've whipped me twice in the Pennington Handicap, but I'll take it this year with Tucky Bells. Ah, lads, there's a grand lil' filly! Positively gr-r-rand!"

The Pennington Handicap was a Kentucky classic,—a fall event,—established by the Pennington family many years before, and regarded by both old Colonel Pennington and his son Tod as peculiarly a family affair. So long as either lived, the Pennington colors of cerise and green were always worn in the Pennington Handicap and usually in the winner's circle. It was a sort of Kentucky tradition that a Pennington horse on that day was unbeatable.

But now the Penningtons were both gone, and with them the luck had vanished. Not since Lady Courageous had been stripped of her racing stockings, had Sandy McKee saddled a winner in the Handicap. He was getting old now and there were not many more years of racing left to him. Wherefore Tucky Bells was his hope, the justification for having retired Lady Courageous from the turf; the crowning expectancy of an old horseman's life. There were other reasons, of which he took less note, but which were none the less important in themselves.

A newer generation of horsemen now ruled the Kentucky tracks. Commercialism had replaced sentiment and racing had become a business much like any other. The day of the one-horse trainer was passing, and the old-timers were being crushed in the competition of big stables and big money. The game had become very expensive for the small operator, and Sandy McKee had seen his resources dwindle until the point was reached when the development of a consistent bread-winner became a financial necessity.

"Boots" Burton, racing manager for the Greenwood Stables, representing a group of New York millionaires, had offered fifteen thousand dollars for Tucky Bells, but Sandy McKee valued the filly beyond the measure of money. His heart was set on winning the Pennington Handicap again—though it be for the last time—and it was the only subject upon which he waxed loquacious.

"Tucky Bells will turn the trick," said he. "I'll sell her to you, Mr. Burton, after she's won the Handicap. Then I'll follow her mother into retirement. What with the sale price and the purse money, the Lady and I will be sittin' pretty for the rest of our days."

Sandy McKee's obsession got to be quite a joke around the track in the early morning workouts. Clockers, rail-birds and rival trainers twitted the old man unmercifully as he held a watch on Tucky Bells and timed her performance with feverish eagerness. They saw to it that their watches always caught the filly about two seconds slower than Sandy's ancient timepiece, and the arguments were long and vociferous.

"She's in gr-r-rand shape," said McKee. "Six furlongs in one-fifteen, well in hand all the way, and I reckon the track at a second slow."

"You're crazy!" said "Red" McKilligan, winking at the others. "Look at my watch: one-seventeen and two-fifths! How 'bout it, boys? Anybody else spot that filly?"

"Sure!" they chorused. "Seventeen and two-fifths. Runs like a dry creek. What did you give her for breakfast, Sandy? One oat or two? Why don't you get a free-runnin' filly?"

The assistant starter chimed in: "You don't expect a Scotch horse to run *free*, do you? She takes her time and saves her breath; that's a Caledonian workout."

So general was the conspiracy that poor Sandy McKee threw his treasured watch away one morning, and then spent the balance of the day trying to find it.

But the time came when no amount of kidding and subterfuges could conceal the fact that Tucky Bells had become a magnificent filly, a legitimate contender for the honors once held by her mother. Red McKilligan was the first to discontinue his good-natured chaffing.

"Sandy," said he, "you've got another world beater, and I'm glad to see you make the grade. Don't take too many chances with her. Just nurse her along this spring, and point her for the Handicap in the fall. She ought to reach top form late in the year if you don't crowd her."

Sandy nodded. "Just a race or two will help her, but I'm not taking any chances. Fifty years on the turf I've been, Mr. McKilligan, and I'd like to take it easy with the old woman at home."

"Didn't know you were married," said Red.

Sandy shook his head. "I'm not," he sighed. "I was never able to get up that much confidence in the sex, and pickin' the wrong woman would be like putting your bank roll on the wrong horse. Man, it would be positively ruinous! No, no, Mr. McKilligan, the old woman I speak of is the dam of Tucky Bells."

"Oh, sure, Lady Courageous—"

"None other! A gr-r-rand companion for any man! There's this about a mare, sir: she'll love you and work for you and be loyal forever, without expectin' too much in return. We'll have many a saddle ride together, once Tucky Bells has made the future secure."

"That's the damndest angle I ever heard of," said Red McKilligan. "But good luck to you, Sandy—I hope she comes home with twenty-to-one tied to her tail."

"It will be more like one-to-two," predicted Sandy, "but do you ken that I never bet two pennies on a race in all my life? Nor do I have to begin now. A good horse and a fair purse has been all I've ever asked of the world. The bettin' ring is where the Devil fiddles for fools."

"Well," said Red, "I've danced to the tune many a time, and I hate to think of what it cost me. But, oh, boy—I've seen the day when it rained violets. The Information Kid gave me five long shots at Juarez—dug 'em up out of the old pickle vat—and they come rollin' home like a lot o' trained pigs. So long, Sandy—see you later!"

McKee nodded and moved off, leading Tucky Bells back to the barns to be cooled out and put away in the straw. A week later he started her in a Junior Cup race, and she danced away from a field that included a smart colt from the Greenwood Stables.

Two weeks later she was in again, and this time Boots Burton sought a conference with McKee.

"Time we were having a little understanding," said Boots. "You're not betting on your horses while I have to take care of heavy commissions when I shoot. I didn't want that last race, and I was glad to see you take it. But I *do* want this Cup event, and the only entry that I'm a little afraid of is yours. If you'll withdraw Tucky Bells,—just pass up the race,—I'll do the same for you. There's enough events for all of us, if we get together in a sensible way—nothing unfair to the public—"

"Sorry, sir," Sandy interrupted. "We look at things differently. With me a race is a race, and I prefer a good loser to a bad winner. If you lack confidence in your horse, it's high time you were getting another. My filly starts, and you can't stop her."

Burton, a heavy drinking man and given to fits of violent temper, suddenly exploded. He gripped McKee savagely by the shoulders, spun him around, and barked into the Scotchman's face:

"Tryin' to top-hat me, huh? Well, get this: I'll give you all the racing you want, and give it to you *good*! I'll *take* you and your damn goat—"

"Damn goat!" screamed Sandy McKee. "Goat!" He clawed at Burton's throat, striving with palsied fingers to grip the ridge of purple fat that bulged above the trainer's collar. The latter pulled loose and struck savagely, once—twice! McKee crumpled upon the tanbark, and Burton, amuck with passion, kicked the prostrate form repeatedly.

IT was at this precise moment that Allah the Most High (May His glory never fade) breathed softly on the mystic mirror of life. Around the corner of the barns came the Information Kid, caroling blithely the scandalous stable song known as "The Garbage Man's Daughter:"

So I said to her: "My darling,
Oh, my darling, tell me true,
Must we—"

The song died on his lips, and he ran forward to recognize

Sandy
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"Hold her out of it for a mile, if it takes all the strength you've got."

Sandy McKee still writhing on the ground, and Burton aiming another kick at him.

"Hold it!" yelled the Kid. "Hold it, you big tramp! Pull up, or I'll see you seven furlongs in hell."

Burton swung around, snarling at the newcomer: "Who let you into the field? This aint your race."

"Oh, yes, it is!" corrected the Kid. "I'm an added starter. You just overlooked me, that's all. C'mon, Boots, let's go!"

Burton lumbered forward to the attack, and the young hustler, fifty pounds lighter, circled warily, his lips white and his gray eyes turned suddenly into small discs of burnished copper.

The Kid had once toiled in the corner of the Philadelphia Phantom, and he knew the strategy of the ring. Feinting prettily, he waited for his heavy opponent to come into him, and then beat Burton to the punch with a right hand that went *plop—plop—plop* flush on the chin!

Boots rocked under the third blow—dropped and lay still.

"May you rest in peace!" said the Information Kid. "Home papers, please copy. Come on, Sandy, old pal, let's go somewhere and cool out."

Fortunately for all concerned, the impromptu battle in Avenue A was not brought to the official notice of the stewards, for race-track discipline is enforced more rigidly than most people suppose. Burton chose outwardly to ignore the incident, and beyond a

heavy welt on McKee's cheek, made by the trainer's heavy ring, there was no visible evidence of what had occurred.

"Just forget it, son!" admonished Sandy. "The man was sore vexed because I had the best horse. When he has time to think it over, he'll come around and apologize. I hold no grudge against any man."

"I admire your faith, Sandy," said the Kid, "but I deplore your ignorance. Wasting your sweetness on that gyp is like feedin' strawberries to a pig. Yea, bo, the only thing I'd send to his funeral would be congratulations."

The hustler remained firm in his distrust of the Greenwood trainer, and watched daily for signs of the vengeance he knew was coming. But Sandy McKee, concerned with little else but the forthcoming test of speed, remained wrapped in the mantle of an old man's dream.

The race in which Tucky Bells was scheduled to measure strides with the Burton colt came on the closing day of the brief spring meeting at Latonia. There were ten other starters—an awkward field, with several bad actors among them, and it so happened that Tucky Bells had drawn a difficult post position in the very center of the mess, while the Burton entry—a quick-breaking horse, was in number one place on the rail.

The Information Kid sought out Sandy McKee in the paddock and whispered in his ear: "Old-timer— (Continued on page 114)

By
Robert C.
Benchley

Lafayette,

Mr. Benchley writes relative to the Parisian impressions of his friends the Peters', whose cicerone he is assuming to be on their European trip: "Mr. Peters had long cherished the motto, 'See Paris and die.' When he actually saw her, he almost did. He survived, however, as this record discloses, and now we are off for merrie England, as it has so often been characterized.

Illustrated by John Held, Jr.



"We didn't see Grant's Tomb in New York, did we? And it's still there, isn't it?"

"Yes, I know, but—"

"You can stay here if you like and see Napoleon's Tomb. You can spend a week in the biggest cemetery here and send the bill to me. I leave Paris tonight. I'll not be kept awake again by a lot of automobiles."

"Where do you want to go?" asked Mrs. Peters in distress. "Atlantic City," said her husband firmly.

"Don't be silly, Walter. We've come here to see Paris, and I'm not going until I've been to the Louvre and seen the fountains at Versailles. You may do as you like."

It was not often that Mrs. Peters asserted herself like this but in her own quiet way she too had a mind of her own.

"Where do you think you'll go from here?" she added.

"Oh, I don't know. I might take a trolley and ride to the end of the line and get off and walk somewhere," said Mr. Peters, who was somewhat taken aback at his wife's stand but made all the more

TRUE to their word, which they had given to the man in the New York travel-bureau, Mr. and Mrs. Peters went direct from Dyke, Ohio, to Paris, France. The chief difference between the two cities, remarked upon immediately by both Mr. and Mrs. Peters, was that the automobile horns in Paris sounded much worse than those in Dyke.

"We had a horn like that on the old Stevens-Duryea, way back before Harriet was married," said Mrs. Peters. "Just that old bulb thing—do you remember, Walter?"

It is strange how a little thing like the sound of an automobile-horn can assume the proportions of a national issue. The constant honking of these thousands and thousands of old-fashioned signals, greeting the Peters' at the station and continuing on through a sleepless night, came to mean Paris to them. The magnificent vistas of the city, the historic buildings, the tree-lined streets and the silent Seine flowing out of the ages under its bridges, all became subordinated on the delicate recording-surface of Mr. Peters' brain to the incessant chorus of toots. So far as he was concerned, Paris was a 1905 model automobile horn.

"We've got to get out of here," said Mr. Peters on the morning of their first day.

"Out of this hotel?" asked his wife.

"Out of Paris," he replied, quietly.

"Why, Walter, you're crazy," said Mrs. Peters. "We haven't seen anything. We haven't seen Napoleon's Tomb, even."



Voici les Peters!



adamant in his own by it. "I'll get on a train and go to the first place that I can pronounce. If they're going to think every night is New Year's Eve here, the sooner I get out, the better."

His last remark was drowned in a mad frenzy of honking in the street below, incident to the meeting of seven taxicabs all going in opposite directions. (Such perversion of the compass is possible in Paris.)

"What did you say?" asked Mrs. Peters.

"Anywhere to get out of this," paraphrased her husband. And she knew that he meant it.

So it was arranged that Mr. Peters should take a little trip south to Marseilles to visit a manufacturing concern with which his firm did business, and should come back and collect Mrs. Peters when she had done the right thing by Napoleon.

In order for Mr. Peters to get to the station, or "gare" as the French stubbornly insist on calling it, he was forced to employ one of those taxies concern-

ing which he had such set ideas. He was in no mood for trifling, and trifling was exactly what was offered him. The driver was a gay fellow with a large, overhanging black mustache who, having tasted all the joys of life, evidently felt that he had nothing more to live for, and drove accordingly. But Mr. Peters was not so reconciled to Death. He put up a fight. As the machine, with an hysterical tooting of its toy horn, veered sharply to the left to avoid crashing into another even wilder bird of passage, Mr. Peters knocked on the window.

"Hey there!" he yelled, with as near to a French accent as he could induce.

The driver grinned and grazed the wheel of a truck.

"Hey there, you—you Frenchman!" was the best that Mr. Peters could do by way of an invective. "Go slow!"

This seemed to the driver to be a jest of tremendous proportions. He fairly rocked with laughter as he squirmed his car in between two busses and went careening off into the gutter.

Mr. Peters would have jumped out, but they were going too fast. At that moment he would, if he had had the slightest influence in international finance, have insisted on an immediate payment in cash of the entire French debt, fifty per cent down and the rest before eleven o'clock Monday morning.

At the station he had a chance to indulge this feeling on a small scale. The meter on the taxi read "5fr.65." Now, even Mr. Peters, who knew no French, knew that out of ten francs there should be change of four francs and thirty-five whatever they are. Subtraction is the same in all languages. But the driver, having definitely established the fact that Mr. Peters was American, proceeded along the customary French lines in such cases and indulged in the great continental sport of short-changing. He gave Mr. Peters two francs and started to put his money away.

"Hey there!" said Mr. Peters again. "I get some more change."

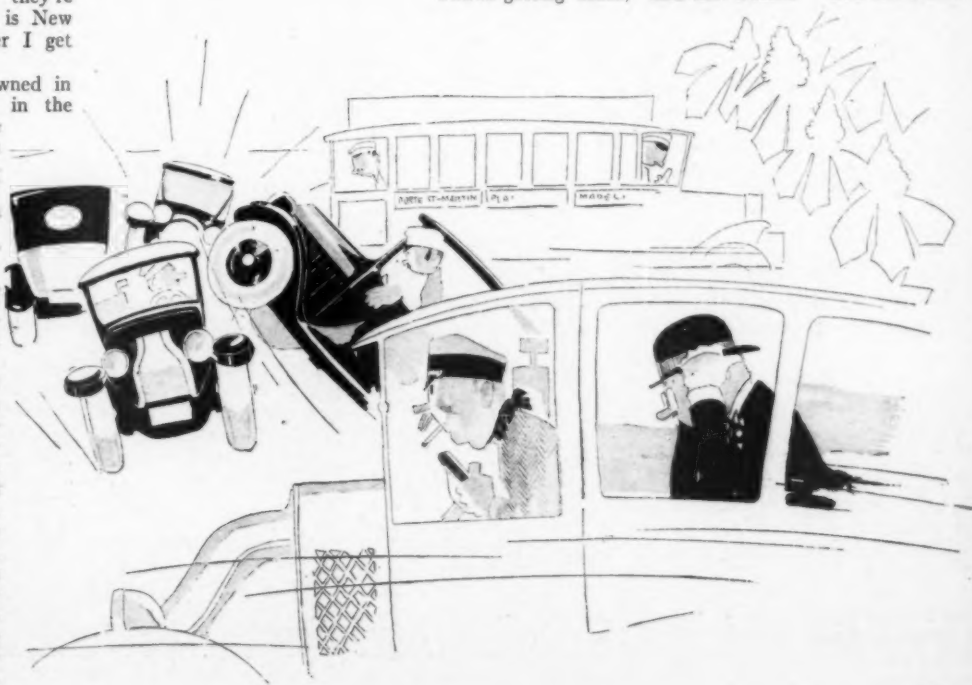
"Que voulez-vous que je vous paye a quel que chose pour promenant avec moi?" said the man in probably the fastest French ever spoken.

Mr. Peters made believe that he was deaf and hadn't heard.

"Come on, now," he said. "Two more."

The man shot him a dirty look and gave him one franc.

"You're getting warm," said Mr. Peters. "One more now."



At this the driver, in a perfect frenzy of rage, threw the remaining change at Mr. Peters and started on a long story of how he and his aunt were looking for the ink-well and the pen of his sister and how, if the weather was pleasant, they had the intention of making a promenade in the gardens of the Tuileries that afternoon with their dog, cat and friend. But by this time, Mr. Peters, with his bag, was well inside the station, and in a state of mind where he could almost have wished that the Germans had reached Paris in 1914.

On the train he found himself in what is known euphemistically as a "salon lit," a tiny room which he was to share with two other passengers, both Frenchmen. One was a large man with a big, black beard, looking something as Santa Claus must have looked when he was a young man just starting out, except that there was nothing kindly in his eye. He resented Mr. Peters from the start. It is only fair to say that Mr. Peters resented him from the same point. Nothing breeds animosity so much as to be cooped up in a compartment with a stranger with no means of communication except gestures and glances. Had Mrs. Peters been along she would have felt at once that the Grim Reaper was stalking not far off.

The other buddy drawn by Mr. Peters was a small, rather natty Frenchman who wore gray silk gloves. This, in itself, was bad. But he immediately threw himself into a sullen perusal of the *Echo de Paris* and was, for the time being, forgotten.

The train had hardly begun to move when a steward in a white coat went through ringing a little bell, and, as the only thing it could mean within reason was dinner, Mr. Peters decided that it would be less trying for all concerned if he were to go and

that there was going to be a big shortage of rolls throughout the world and he was not going to be caught napping. He piled his treasure jealously alongside his plate so that no one could snatch it from him. Then, with the air of a man who has not eaten for weeks, he began devouring great chunks. It was strange, because he was a small man and gave no outward evidence of being in need of food.

The soup was another big adventure for him. He entered the cup as a man enters a cave, until only his legs from the knees down were visible, and from what Mr. Peters could gather, he was having a rather tough battle of it inside. Since childhood Mr. Peters had been driven mad by people who made sounds while eating. And he was now a middle-aged man with less resistance than he had had when a child.

The whole meal was just one feverish struggle for the Frenchman. Each time a dish was passed he raised himself up to get a better view of the platter and indicated with his finger just what choice morsels the waiter was to put on his plate. He demanded a second helping of everything. And when it came to consuming the water-cress salad he surpassed himself. His method was to place a large forkful of water-cress just at the entrance to his mouth, lean over the plate with the strands dangling like one of those potted ferns they hang in windows, and with the combined aid of fork, forefinger and a forced draught, to poke the cress in as needed. It was very, very pretty indeed and it so endeared the man to Mr. Peters that he thought some of asking his hand in marriage.

The meal over, it was voted that the French representative had not only got his money back on his dinner but was some fourteen francs ahead of the game. And together he and Mr. Peters staggered back to their cozy home.

There being nothing to do after dinner on French trains, it is the custom of the country to retire immediately. When Mr. Peters, after entering several wrong compartments, finally landed in his own, he found that the little beds had been pulled out and that the large Frenchman had already retired beneath his black beard. A ghostly blue light was burning overhead.

Mr. Peters observed that his roommates did not undress, but simply removed their collars and shoes and coats and reclined in charming semi-dress. Mr. Peters did not like

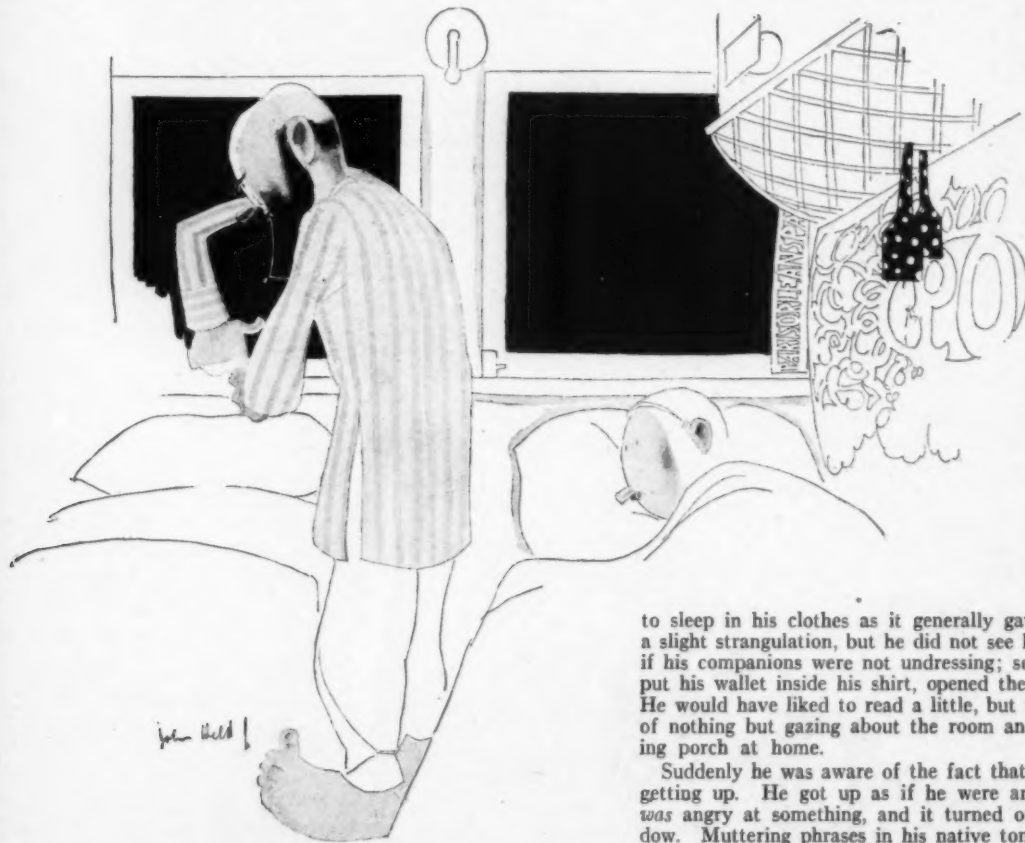
to sleep in his clothes as it generally gave him a headache and a slight strangulation, but he did not see his way clear to undress if his companions were not undressing; so he loosened his collar, put his wallet inside his shirt, opened the window and lay down. He would have liked to read a little, but the blue light permitted of nothing but gazing about the room and thinking of his sleeping porch at home.

Suddenly he was aware of the fact that the big bunk-mate was getting up. He got up as if he were angry at something. He was angry at something, and it turned out to be the open window. Muttering phrases in his native tongue, he charged toward it and shut it with a bang. Then he went back to bed.

It didn't seem possible to Mr. Peters that there could be any idea of the three of them sleeping in a tiny compartment with the window closed. Even a Frenchman would know better than to do that. It must be that they were coming to a tunnel. So he waited.

But they came to no tunnel. The train bounded along its way, tossing Mr. Peters back and forth on his trundle-bed, bruising first his left hip and then his right shoulder, but there was no tunnel. And the heat became terrific.

So, when it seemed that his enemy (Continued on page 137)



sit in the diner. The small man in the gray silk gloves was seized with the same idea. So together they staggered through the line of undulating vestibules to the evening meal.

They were seated opposite each other at the same table. Each tried looking out the window to avoid the other's eyes. Each reached for the same piece of bread at the same time. The *entente* was growing less and less cordial with every second.

Then the waiter came by with a basket of rolls. Mr. Peters took one. His neighbor took four, three in one fist and an extra one in the other. He had evidently been tipped off by some one

"There was me,
handy as an ele-
phant, standing
by. I caught her."



The Garden of the Bey

By

William McFee

FEW people would have credited Captain Linder with a sense of beauty or with any talent for refinement. Yet he had it, and he derived most of his happiness from the possession of it, and from his conviction that the men he met lacked the power to appreciate his superiority to them in this respect. You might almost have credited him with making a show of his secret good-fortune. He really did brag of it at times.

He had been letting his passenger, Jimmy Russell, into the secret for the entire voyage from Bizerta to Alexandria, a matter of five days in the little old *Lauderdale*. Jimmy Russell, a photographer of strange men, women, children, animals, scenes and episodes, a sort of pilgrim beset by a passionate curiosity concerning the visible world, was a surprised but receptive listener to these confidences. Jimmy had just made a trying and rather dangerous journey from Biskra in the desert, down to Laghouat and Ghardaïa, thence along the shores of the Tunisian Lakes to Gabes and up the coast to Bizerta. He had brought back some extremely fine negatives, and it pleased him to discover how ardently Captain Linder studied them and showed a vigorous appreciation of their qualities. His first interest was for the dramatic features that Jimmy managed to incorporate in his pic-

No American writer has in greater measure the power of making the reader see the color and form and life—and smell the odors—of the odd corners of the world than William McFee. And well he may, for he's familiar with every scene of which he writes, having sailed the seven seas for many years, though he has now "swallowed the anchor" and lives ashore in Connecticut.

tures of desert life. He pointed them out and expressed approbation. He had a small camera himself, and he took his passenger down to his cabin and showed him several albums full of snapshots of many places. They were good and Jimmy said so.

"Do you develop these yourself?" he asked.

"I certainly do," said Captain Linder. "I have a red scuttle light for my bathroom. Now I will show you some more." And he took out another album, bound in red morocco leather, with a lock.

This was a great surprise for Jimmy Russell. There was nothing about the Captain to indicate such a secret in his life. He was a youngish man of thirty, rather sharp and peremptory in manner, a shade egotistical in statement, with a slight tendency



toward assuming that he had the right-of-way in a conversation or argument, and evidently above the position he held as commander of a small tramp-steamer. The crew seemed to regard him with respect, if not affection. He had in his cabin the usual pictures of a suburban house of surpassing ugliness, family groups, and groups of ship's officers, mere wraiths dressed in uniforms, with a life-buoy in front of them. There were several photographs of children and one of an Airedale. But nothing to show that Captain Linder had a secret. Jimmy Russell did not comprehend at first that he was being taken into a confidence. He did not realize that it was part of the Captain's ethical code to approach such a revelation obliquely. And he had the English habit of understatement.

"Who is this?" asked Jimmy Russell, pointing to the picture of a girl.

"Somebody I know," said the Captain, looking as if to make sure, and then going on with his preparations for a drink. "Oh, just somebody I know."

"But they're all of the same girl," said Jimmy, turning over the leaves.

"Yes, she's a friend of mine. I know her quite well," said

Captain Linder, and there was a note of pride in his voice as he spoke.

"I guess you do. You've taken enough photographs of her," muttered Jimmy. He was impressed. The girl was dark, with strong features and a vigorously beautiful figure, and the pictures revealed her in every pose she might take throughout the day. She was at a window looking out among flowers. She was going to market with a basket. She was on her way, apparently, to church. She was in an apron, with a saucepan in her hand. She was sitting in a chair, darning a stocking. She was at a table, writing a letter. She was standing by a mail-box in the street, posting a letter. She was holding a camera, taking a snapshot. And in all these pictures she looked out upon the world with a dark, patient, provocative smile, as though she were going through the ordeal to gratify the half-understood desires of the person who was accumulating these records.

Jimmy looked up at the Captain, who was holding a glass toward him. He took it and made a gesture of salutation.

"Well, what's the answer, Captain?" he asked. "Am I wrong in assuming you take a particular interest in this young lady?"

Captain Linder drank and sat down, examining the beverage



Every hawker tried to sell Jimmy a variety of articles ranging from peanuts to Turkish delight.

beckoned. Jimmy rose and looked out; the *Lauderdale* was sailing abeam of a brownish-green lump away to the southward, one of the many islands scattered between Sicily and Africa.

"Do you know what that is?" asked the Captain.

"Sure; it's an island," replied Jimmy, rather at a loss.

"Yes, that's Pantelleria."

"Is it? What about it?"

"You don't know," said the Captain, draining his glass, "that Pantelleria is an Italian convict settlement."

"Well, what of it? You aren't calling there, are you?"

"No, but I go past it every voyage," remarked the Captain. "You know, they say it's a hell."

closely. He seemed to be pondering the question, as though it shed a new and unexpected light upon the problem. Then he stared hard at his passenger and nodded.

"You can put it that way," he admitted finally. "Yes, I should say I took a certain amount of interest in her."

"Foreign extraction, isn't she?" asked Jimmy. He glanced at the last picture in the album. The girl was waving a handkerchief in farewell. She was in a short calico dress printed with an austere rectangular border design that called to mind, somehow, a Greek frieze. Captain Linder nodded. He stood up and looked out of the polished brass porthole which opened over his red-plush settee. Gazing up at him, Jimmy was struck by the pathetic childishness of the man's face, seen from below. He suspected it was an instinctive knowledge of this that made Captain Linder always appear to crouch and lower when he spoke. And this expression of elvish youth was now intensified by the reflection of the sea across his pale blue eyes. Outside, the shining blue water was hurrying past in a series of pulsing and glittering points of light. Behind them Cape Bon was fading into the horizon. Ahead lay the Malta Channel and an unchanged course for Alexandria. Suddenly Captain Linder turned and

"Well, there'd be no particular object in making it a heaven," suggested Jimmy. His eye fell on the photograph album lying open on the settee, where he had left it, and as he was about to pick it up again he became suddenly aware of the fact that there was some connection in the Captain's mind between Pantelleria and the girl in those pictures, who was, he had admitted, of foreign extraction. Yet Jimmy, ruthless as he was as a rule in digging down and unearthing useful information, hesitated now. He decided to wait. He handed the album back with the remark that it was a very interesting series of pictures. A very pretty girl. Lucky man.

"What do you mean, lucky?" demanded the Captain suddenly. "You think I'm lucky?"

"To be her friend," explained Jimmy, smiling in spite of himself. Captain Linder's state of mind was interesting.

"Oh, her friend. Well, perhaps I'm a little more than that, Mr. Russell."

This was the way of it, during the five days' run to Alexandria. Jimmy Russell was no fool. He soon discovered that the Captain was suffering from a bad case of suppressed loquacity. This was vividly revealed when he said one day, that if the owners knew

he had a girl friend in Alexandria they'd cashier him. And at that they wouldn't be long getting the information if the mates or engineers got wind of it. News like that traveled faster than—how fast do they say light travels?—hundred and eighty thousand miles a second?—well, just about that speed!

Jimmy let him talk. He asked very few questions, and he was rewarded by a tale of love so unexpectedly tragic in some of its aspects that he often walked up and down the little bridge deck of the *Lauderdale* for hours, thinking about it. While he was doing this Captain Linder would lean on the rail, looking across the sea, which had no islands in it at all now, but seemed as wide and as empty as the Atlantic itself. He would lean on the rail, and the pose of the man seemed to convey the impression that he was waiting for his words to sink into his passenger's mind, or perhaps heart, because he was aware of the character of his experiences, and the wonderful beauty of the passion encompassing his life.

Jimmy let him talk. Sometimes, as they lay in deck chairs under the bridge, listening to the regular footfall of the officer of the watch, and the occasional clash of gears from the steering engine, the Captain would remain deep in thought for a long while. But sooner or later he would return to his one topic, with amusingly innocent pretense that he was taking up a fresh subject, and he would tell his listener a little more about Marie Mansour, the girl of the pictures, and the tiny establishment on the top floor, with a garden on the roof, of the tall building behind Stein's Oriental Stores in the Rue des Sœurs in Alexandria. And more interesting even than this, to Jimmy, was the gradual unfolding of the Captain's life and how he came to be the proprietor of the establishment. He was very watchful lest his hearer should "jump to conclusions."

"You mustn't jump to conclusions," he said often, and by this, it appeared, he meant "the usual business you read about in the Sunday papers."

Jimmy was surprised to find that this vague description made it perfectly clear what the Captain meant. He had no particular gift of language and this affair ought by rights to have happened to some one who had that gift. This was how the Captain impressed Jimmy, that he was entirely and gloriously aware, inside of him, of his distinction in finding such a girl, but he was powerless to make it known, otherwise than by gruff, laconic, often by rude, expressions. More than that, Jimmy suspected that Captain Linder was only conforming to what he imagined was due to his position as a seaman and a Britisher by being inarticulate yet aggressively proud. To an American such a mentality was very nearly inexplicable; but Jimmy Russell, who came from New Hampshire by way of New York City, felt he got a glimpse of it as he gradually collected notes on the sort of home-life awaiting the Captain should he ever leave the sea.

THERE was no father, he having died while the Captain was an apprentice in sail, and the family consisted of his mother, and four sisters all older than himself, and they kept a pastry shop and tea-room on a steep street in one of those thousand-year-old cathedral towns of East Anglia. Captain Linder took a sort of gloomy pride in their position in the place, and in their prosperity, which had enabled them to move their home out to a suburban villa. They were in no sense dependent upon him, he said, but they were very devout and particular in their ways. They never said it in so many words, but there was no doubt they regarded going to sea as scarcely the correct profession for their brother, their father having been an alderman and justice of the peace.

Jimmy had a suspicion the Captain sided with his family in this feeling, wistfully conscious that he had been a failure from their point of view, yet claiming his right to his own life—because to him their life in that old city of the East Anglian plain was beyond all endurance. There was in him somehow a craving for light, and color, and violent passion, for which he could discover nothing that would assuage it at home. It had grown and grown through the years of probation, and his scornful, cantankerous yeoman blood had held him back from the usual reefs and shoals of the imaginative sailor, until he had got command of this small steamer making the round of the Mediterranean ports.

It was a come-down from being mate of a White Star intermediate boat; but that in its way had been as uncongenial to him as the family life at home. It had been Liverpool and New York, New York and Liverpool, with frozen meat and general cargo, a ceaseless grind of hard work and vigilance on board sixteen thousand tons of anxiety. This here, Captain Linder said, had been like getting to heaven after it. It had given him what he had been unconsciously groping after, a chance to see the love-

liness of the world, the beauty of old cities, and the romantic glamour of strange lands and peoples. Jimmy Russell saw this in the albums he often looked at in the Captain's room, with their pictures of out-of-the-way places like Sfax and Aguilas, of Aegean Islands and Italian towns. And it culminated one day in Alexandria, as he walked along past the Coptic Church towards the Boulevard Ramleh, and met Marie Mansour.

"She was walking past me, you understand," he said to Jimmy, who was staring in amazement at the man who had taken three days to reach the central fact of his story, "walking past me, and she was staring at me so hard I was embarrassed, wondering what she was driving at, when I saw of a sudden she wasn't looking at me at all. Bumped into me, she did. And realized what she'd done, you know—looked round in a strange way with her hands out to keep herself from falling. And there was me, as handy as an elephant, standing by. I caught hold of her just in time, when she fell over."

CAPTAIN LINDER devoted some time to working round and round the dreadful mistake that Jimmy might be making, "jumping to conclusions" that the girl was not respectable. That was the very cause of her collapse, the very reason she didn't know what she was doing when she fell up against a seagoing slob like him.

Jimmy ventured a diplomatic question.

"Certainly," replied Captain Linder. "She had married one of these Italians. You know there's a large Italian colony in Egypt. But he was from Naples. Used to travel all over the place. One of these smooth chaps. She is a Syrian. Now don't go jumping to conclusions. Most Syrians, you may not know, are Christians, same as you and me, even if they're not Protestants. And her family had gone back to Beyrout and got killed in a riot with the Arabs. So there she was, alone with him in Alexandria. Him going and coming all the time, and living well. Gave her plenty of money to keep house. He was supposed to be a traveler, selling machinery for a firm in Genoa. And then one day, after he arrives from a trip to Europe, there's a knock at the door, and when she opens it a crowd of police rush in. For him. They had caught him passing bad money. Bad fifty-lira notes were coming in somewhere and they'd got him at last. Big engraving plant in Genoa."

"They took him away, after he'd shot one of them through the lung so he nearly died. And as he was already wanted for half a dozen crimes in Italy, the banks had him extradited. And he got ten years in Pantelleria."

Jimmy offered a remark about the girl.

"That's right," assented the Captain. "She had nothing to do with it. And she had no money at all. You understand now what I mean about not jumping to conclusions. Egypt's a funny place for a girl in her position. Alexandria's full of men watching for the girls who are in a fix just like that. Full. They will follow a girl along the street telling her what a fine time she can have if she'll only be reasonable. Chaps in fezzes. Beys, they call themselves. Lucky she fell where she did."

Jimmy conceded that it was lucky, and he began to appreciate how exquisite must have been the discomfort of a man with such a story to tell and with nobody he could trust to accept the confidence in the right way. Nobody who could keep his secret and refrain from "jumping to conclusions."

There had been a seat under the trees near that Coptic Church and they had sat down until she was better. He had discovered then that she had that day reached the end of her tether. She had been hanging on in the hopes of being engaged in Stein's Oriental Stores—largest department store in the eastern Mediterranean—but the employment bureau had heard of what had happened in spite of her going back to her maiden name, and that road was closed to her.

"What could I do?" demanded Captain Linder harshly. "Couldn't let her starve, hey? Well, that was how it started."

"Mind you," he went on, watchful lest conclusions should be jumped at in spite of all his care, "mind you, I went into the matter and found she had told me the truth. I loaned her enough to pay her rent and board till I got back. Even then, after she got this place she has now, we—we waited. See what I mean? When I was in Genoa I asked the agent about it. He laughed. He told me a man who went to Pantelleria for ten years was dead, you might say. We'd never be bothered about him again, he told me. All the same, we waited."

The Captain harped on the waiting, not so much because he thought Jimmy doubted him but in order to explain the situation. He never alluded to the fact, but Jimmy was aware that under the banked fires of this waiting there had been burning a passion,



"It says that Number Twelve Hundred and Seven died in Pantelleria one month ago."

each for the other, that eventually consumed all save the man's native resolution to keep it a thing apart from his professional and family life at home. This was his home now, yet over it hung the sorrowful cloud which only a stranger's death could destroy.

Jimmy had the most of it, by the time the *Pharos* Lighthouse was picked up and the *Lauderdale* got a pilot to take her into the great harbor of Alexandria. The ancients, Captain Linder remarked gruffly to his passenger, when he had a moment to spare from his duties, called it by a name meaning "the haven of happy returns," and a gleam of unwonted humor came into his pale blue eyes when Jimmy made some general remark about history repeating itself.

"Ah!" he said, and moved to the bridge-rail again. Sometime later he was still smiling faintly.

Nevertheless Jimmy Russell, having much experience of men in many climes, did not expect to be retained any longer as the repository of confidences. Men, like ships, change their character when they touch the land. So he was surprised later, when the formalities of arrival were over, to have Captain Linder, almost unrecognizable in a smart linen suit and straw hat, come to the door of his cabin, where he was strapping the last of his baggage.

"Thought you might like to come in my boat," said the Captain. "It's a long way, if you've never been here before."

"Sure I'll come," said Jimmy.

The sun was setting behind the *Pharos* and the great palace of Ras-el-Tin as the Arab boat sailed across the western harbor and up to the Customhouse quay. The water was a gleaming coppery plaque of light. The hulls of steamers lay like huge masses of shadow stranded on a shining floor. A warship was flashing a light on her crossbeams to the signal station on the Cafarelli Fortress. The other Arab boats coming in from distant vessels advanced with a steady, almost imperceptible movement, like huge sleeping birds under great wings. The domes and minarets of the city drew nearer.

Captain Linder made no comment upon this scene. Jimmy Russell knew the man well enough by now to understand how it took hold of him, how the whole glittering city was a setting for his secret. For Jimmy himself there was about it a feeling of coming home. After the desert and the tents of the Bedouins and Berbers, after their dirty little towns and the desolate watery wastes of Tunisia, this bright city was home to a white man. For a few days he would rest.

(Continued on page 108)

Lords and

PERHAPS a bit ago you may have read "The Back Seat," and more recently "Matriarch." If so you will find quite a different Gladys Stern in the present story from the one whom you glimpsed in either of those books. Miss Stern is a young English novelist who has captured her audiences on both sides of the Atlantic and whose work possesses in extraordinary measure that unanalyzable, subtle quality called charm.

"YOU promised to come at once if I summoned you wherever you were. Did you mean it? Come now. Am in great distress you can help perhaps."

Rufus Oliver Carey read this telegram over, three or four times; then he turned it about in his hands, after the fashion of strong men in perplexity, and tried reading it from right to left, instead of from left to right; and then, very softly, he said—what strong men in perplexity are sometimes known to say, under a hot sky at the beginning of summer. For this was May, and he was in Rome. He did not know from whom the telegram came. It had been forwarded to him from what he whimsically called his "permanent quarters" in London, though he had never stayed there for longer than five consecutive days. The lady in distress had neither bothered to sign her name, nor to convey a suggestion of her address.

"This telegram," said Oliver Carey to himself, "is from a very conceited lady; for she thinks, heaven help her, that to her alone have I said that if she summon me I will instantly come! Now I ask you,"—and he must have been addressing, earnestly, the shades of many fair ladies, for he was alone in his room, in Rome, in May,— "would that not have been unchivalrous in a man to promise his help, his aid, to one sole lady in a thousand, simply because he loves her! Dash it, what other way is there for a man to take a graceful farewell?"

And indeed, "Send for me, and wherever I am, I will come!" was no more and no less than Oliver's conventional formula of good-by; he knew no other. He never said: "So long; be good!" He rarely



She was tall and slim, like Sylvia, with eyes the color of the sea on a rainy evening.

said: "Cheerio!" For, though these be degenerate times, and though Oliver was a philanderer by instinct, an eccentric in habits, a vagabond from choice, he was also, by instinct, in habit and from choice, a knight-errant.

He consulted the telegram again, and then he tried to pick out individual faces from all those that came thronging into his memory, and to attach to these faces, their voices; and to attach to these voices, the words: "You promised to come at once, wherever you were. Did you mean it? Come now. Am in great distress; you can help, perhaps."

"Perhaps," sounded very like Sylvia; strangely like Lady Sylvia Berkeley, that silver-witted, enchanting goddess; imperiously she might summon him, taking it for granted that he would come, but not taking it wholly for granted that he would be of any use to her if he did come. Yes, that was in the authentic note of his disdainful Sylvia. Who else would so subtly ignore all the women who might have counted in his life before—and even after—he had met her?

He packed a suitcase, and left for England within an hour.

And within thirty-six hours he was in Mayfair—for this, you will perceive, is a high-class comedy, most elegantly staged; and if you have not already perceived it, the unemotional mien of the footman who opened the door for Oliver will at once give the show away.

"Lady Sylvia is at home, sir."

"Tell her," said Carey, confidently, "that a very travel-stained gentleman wishes to have speech with her, urgently, for he is in distress, and she can help him, perhaps!—And that," he reflected, "will show her that I have come a long way in answer to her appeal, and that I am thirsty."

As he was shown into Lady Sylvia's sitting-room, a girl brushed past him, leaving it. She was tall and slim, like

Sylvia, with eyes the color of the sea on a rainy evening; and she had been crying. In passing, she gave Carey such a fierce and fiery look that he knew she was seeing some other man where he stood, some other man with whom she was very angry.

"I did mean it," said Carey to Sylvia, for now

Ladies

By

G. B. Stern

Illustrated by Everett Shinn

"How dare you
say you are in
great distress,
Sylvia?"

they were alone together. And she smiled, a little ironically:

"I am sure you did!"

Then he produced the telegram: "In great distress," he read out, and confronted her with it. "How dare you say you are in great distress, Sylvia? I have come from Rome, where I was enjoying myself immensely; but, like young Lochinvar, I stayed not for stock and I stopped not for stone, which is very difficult to say in a hurry; I swam the Esk River where ford there was none, and that, at least, should touch your ivory to warm humanity, Sylvia. And now you are not in the least in distress. You are smiling; you are clothed and sheltered, and your feet are dry. I am in a great rage with you, Sylvia. What is it you want me to do?"

Idly, she read through the telegram. "How did you guess it to be from me?"

"And did you think," Rufus Oliver Carey said, reproachfully, "could you think that I had ever forgotten how, on parting from you, I had promised to come wherever I might be, at a single word of summons? Or did you imagine, could you imagine that I had ever made this promise to anyone but you? As a matter of fact," he added, not because he saw the delicately questioning lift at the cor-



ners of her eyebrows, for he knew Sylvia was too well-bred to doubt his word, but just because he wanted to prove to her that he too had silver wits to match hers, "as a matter of fact, it was the 'perhaps' that gave you away. I am a psychologist, Sylvia, of no mean ability."

"Are you thirsty?" Sylvia asked him. "Because if not, you had better start at once; but if you are, I will ring for whisky, soda and ice."

"I am thirsty," said Carey. "Straight for where?"

"Italy."

"My dear, didn't you hear me say that I had just come from Italy? You surely would not be so inconsiderate—"

BUT she was. Sylvia was inconsiderate. She distinctly meant Italy. And this was the story she told him, and this was the errand on which she sent him:

"On the fifteenth of May, Oliver, it has been our—I will use a *cliché* and call it our custom immemorial, to give a ball down at Brestock, to celebrate our wistaria in its glory. It is undoubtedly the finest wistaria in England. It trails along the terraces, and drips in great waterfalls of shining mauve, and its scent is as near a bath in heaven as I think one would ever get in heaven. So, on the fifteenth of May, just before it droops and begins to think about fading, we give a ball: and when we are not dancing, we walk in couples along the terraces; and small, warm winds ripple over us, and over the wistaria, and shake out its scent, infecting our flirtations with such clean ecstasy that we turn and kiss each other like brother and sister, all along the terraces; and this is a very moving sight, Oliver, especially nowadays, which, like every other nowadays, is full of sin—so the papers say!

"Oliver, I have invited a certain young man to my Wistaria Ball, and he is in Italy, and I am afraid he won't come. I want you to go and fetch him—that's all! Be very persuasive. I chose you out of all the crowd of men who at parting have spoken your famous only-summon-me-lady lines—"

"Have other men—" began Carey, disconsolately, and then checked himself, at sight of the laughter in Sylvia's eyes.

"I chose you, Oliver, because only you, of all of them, are gifted with a silver tongue. But, above all things, you must not mention my name to him. This young man, you see, might say afterward: 'She had to send a messenger for me!' And then he would puff out his chest, and I should slowly begin to hate him. So it is your job to make him think that he is coming spontaneously. Talk to him, with all your eloquence, about the wistaria, and about the lords and ladies who walk on the terraces, and who, when the wind ripples along the blossoms, kiss each other like brother and sister."

"All this is very fine and poetical," said Carey; "so poetical, that I think you have forgotten the only prosaic point—which is, that today is the seventeenth of May, and however much I hurry in your cause, the young man will be late for your Wistaria Ball on May the fifteenth."

"I have postponed the ball for a week," Sylvia told him; and now she lay back on the cushions, and her head drooped as though she were suddenly tired and listless.

Carey stood up. He had had his whisky and soda. The butler had come and gone noiselessly, as is the way of his tribe.

"I am ready to start. And, although it is not your habit, perhaps you had better enlighten me as to your renegade's name and address."

"His name is Lord Dunedin; and his other name is Ralph, which we pronounce to rhyme with 'safe,' you know; for that is one of the wicked, foolish things that aristocrats love to do to puzzle the honest *bourgeois*. As for his address, I don't know it; but he lives in Italy."

"Thank you," said Carey; "you can't narrow it down any more than that?"

"A resourceful man—" she began, teasingly. "Well, but his letters have the postmark 'Porto Felipo' on them, and he says he has to carry them three and a half kilometers to the nearest post office; so that may help you; and his house is on a hill facing southeast, but not quite on the top of the hill; so that may help you. The olives are set very close and thick about it, and he can see the Mediterranean while he is digging; he says it looks a different color seen through the twisted branches of the olives, from just ordinary sea beheld from Brighton pier. And he talks of a bay tree which stands up stiff and straight in his garden, with no leaves except a bunch at the very top. These are all the clues I can give you, Oliver."

He nodded. "That ought to be enough. And what is this lord

and this hero doing, in a little house among the olives, digging in his garden, and occasionally pausing to reflect on the color of the Mediterranean?" But then he rather wished he hadn't asked, for Sylvia's eyes looked as though he, or some one, had hurt her. Yet it turned out that it was she who had hurt herself, and that most foolishly, as even an enchantress will sometimes do when enchanted.

For this man, Ralph Dunedin, had been one of the most brilliant and the most popular of all that brilliant, popular, reckless set, which calmly does the Wrong Thing in the right setting, whether in Mayfair or Cowes or Scotland or the Riviera; except, perhaps, in wartime, when it went to do the Right Thing, but in the wrong setting. But he had moods, so Sylvia confided in Oliver Carey—queer, bitter moods, in which he posed as one who longs for hermitage, and sighs for simplicity, and yearns for hard digging in the earth; by-the-sweat-of-his-brow moods, which, of course, could not be tolerated for a moment unless they were sincere, which nobody believed Ralph Dunedin could possibly be, for he danced the ultra-modern dances far too well, and the polish on his fox-trot was phenomenal. So his friends laughed at him, whenever he voiced that harsh desire for solitude and work; and the girl whom he loved laughed more scornfully than any, so that he grew angry at last, saying he would prove to them and prove to her that he meant what he said, and that he was going at once. The girl whom he loved had mocked his hurry: "You will be back in time for my Wistaria Ball, I think, Ralph."

He had replied: "I think not."

To which she had furthermore mocked him: "Oh yes, I think you will, Ralph!" And this she had said in front of all the others, and they had all agreed with her: after seven months he would surely have had enough; if not long before, he would be back in time for her Wistaria Ball!

"Of course he boasted in his letters, Oliver; he boasted how he loved the new life which is at least as old as Adam—what a success it was, how right he had been. That was nothing; I had expected that; but sometimes a word or two crept in that made me uneasy, Oliver; for I know, you see, that, though dancing and one's friends and the life one has always led are strong things, yet roots and silence and a bay tree and the color of the sea can be mysteriously strong, as well; and even hard work, that can be a strong thing, too. I began to grow frightened that he would not come. There are other fools than April fools, Oliver; there are May fools; and this was very near the fifteenth, and he had sent no word in his letters, and I should have been made a fool of in front of the Others. The Others play a rather large part in this story, though, rightly, they never should play any part at all. But we hate to be laughed at, and we hate to be pitied; and if he did not come to my ball after I had been so confident, some of the Others would have laughed, and some would have pitied me.

"I wanted to make quite, quite sure whether he meant to come, or not. So I had an inspiration: I postponed my Wistaria Ball for a week, from May the fifteenth to May the twenty-second; and I let all my guests know that I had postponed it—except, of course, Ralph; and on the fifteenth of May, I sat down all alone on the terrace at Brestock, where the wistaria was very lovely. . . . And I waited to see if he would come.

"It was rather lucky, on the whole, wasn't it, Oliver, that I had postponed the ball? Even though the wistaria is now past its glory, and has begun to lose its color. Because now—I know. But now there is just time for you to travel out there, and talk to him, Oliver. How long will you need, to talk to him? Two hours—three? Remember: May the twenty-second, and try to let him arrive before midnight. You may come to my Ball, too, if you like."

RUFUS OLIVER CAREY chose not to be present, the following week, at the Wistaria Ball down at Brestock. He chose, instead, and most perversely, to sit on a bench, a very select bench, in a small but very select square in Mayfair; and, turning his back on the windows of Sylvia's house—for what was the good, as she was not there?—he cupped his chin in his hands, and gazed forlornly in front of him into the pallid spaces of moonlight, and gave way to forlorn moonlight reflections about Sylvia, and Sylvia, and Sylvia. . . .

For he had no doubt but that that obstinate young lord would act on the recent instructions which he, Carey, had given him before they had parted, three hours ago, at Victoria station: Just before midnight, he would suddenly and dramatically appear in the doorway of the terrace hung and tasseled with the famous wistaria. Between one dance and another dance he would appear,

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"We only danced the length of an ordinary ballroom dance."

when the shining parquet would be empty, and all the lords and ladies would be pacing the terrace outside, where the blossoms hung like a dream of pale purple, rippled all with silver. . . .

Carey could see, as in a vision, these very civilized lords and ladies passing up and down: tall and slim and disdainful, the ladies; and the lords very silent, for what was there to say between a dance and a dance? Already they had said, not once but over and over again, "Wonder if Dunedin will turn up, what?" and even, with an effort at sparkling conversation: "Sylvia'll be fed up if he don't, y'know!"

And Sylvia? He imagined Sylvia as a very gracious hostess, yet with her rain-gray eyes a little troubled. Could Oliver be trusted to send him here in time? Not that she cared so much, but—

And then, suddenly. . . there stood Ralph, between the pale purple bunches of wistaria. Sylvia might not be the first to see him, lest he should think she had looked for his coming at all anxiously; she must wait until another should see him first; and then a murmur running from lip to lip of those she called "the Others"—"By the grace of Eros, he is here!" . . . or whatever it is that noblemen exclaim in these moments of deep emotion!

But Sylvia would exclaim nothing at all, nor triumph at all. She would only come forward and dance with him. . . . And so soon she would have to learn that Ralph had not come back, but had merely accepted her invitation to a ball, which is quite a different matter.

For, as Carey had persuaded him, it is impolite to make a lady look a fool, if by politely making yourself a fool for an hour or two, you can save her from it.

"In thirty-six hours I am going back, Sylvia, which will give us just time to get married, so that you can come back with me; yes, whether you hate it or not!"

He would tell her this, while they were dancing on the shining slippery parquet floor, to the shining slippery music of that highly civilized band known as "Quentin's." And then he would remind her of the last time they had danced together—

And Rufus Oliver Carey suddenly ground his heel into the gravel, and a spasm of hot anger contracted his brows. For why had Sylvia, so frank in everything else, not told him that she had been to that little house, where the bay tree with its crest of leaves on the top stood tall among a gray tangle of olives on the side of a hill in Italy? She had pre- (Continued on page 112)

The girl from Park Avenue remained the silent spectator.

RARELY does a magazine publish a serial novel that produces as many letters from gratified readers as has this mature work of Mr. Irwin's. When one realizes that twelve per cent of American marriages, according to the best estimate, end in divorce, it is significant that such a novel as this, concerned as it is with the fruits of divorce, should be accorded so much praise during its serial publication. And many of the letters it elicits are from men and women themselves divorced.

The Story So Far:

LUCINDA was twelve when she first began to learn—what a daughter of divorce is likely to learn. She lived on Cynthea Court in a Southern city, with her well-loved father Ike Shelby, and her beautiful mother Matalea; and though Matalea made scenes because of Ike's passion for amateur theatricals, and spent a good deal of time in the society of a Mr. Nash—to the child, life in the main had seemed good. Now, however, she discovered that Mr. Weaver, not Ike Shelby, was her real father—and that she was to spend the ensuing six months with the Weavers in New Jersey.

While Lucinda was still a baby, Matalea had divorced Weaver, it seemed. According to the decree, the child was to spend half the year with each parent. Shortly afterward Matalea had married Ike Shelby. Mr. Weaver had never before shown interest in Lucinda, but he had now remarried, and was claiming his "share" in the child.

To Lucinda the sojourn with the Weavers was a nightmare visit to Vulgaria. Her stepbrother Eddie proved a genius in persecution; and the parents compelled Lucinda to pour at their garish parties—from the cocktail-shaker, as a sort of *jeune-fille* bartender. Finally, when they routed her out of bed one night to assist at a particularly inebriate function, she slipped out and made her way (after an adventure in New York which was made easier for her by a chance-met boy named Martin Cole) back to Cynthea Court—only to find that Ike and Matalea were about to separate.

Directly after this second divorce Mrs. Shelby hurried to Philadelphia. Everybody, even the confused Lucinda, knew why she went East so suddenly. Ezra Nash had arranged to cast away his wife at the hour of convenience; soon there would be another wedding.

Matalea chose the Greenbriar-Pelham for her strategic headquarters, and there Lucinda became a very wise, very mature and somewhat bored young person. Life at the hotel seemed likely to



Mated

endure indefinitely, though they moved now and then, to progressively smaller quarters—for Ezra Nash made up with his wife instead of divorcing her.

And at length Matalea showed signs of desperation—was seen at the horse-show with Colonel Harbison, a notorious old racing-man. Lucinda began looking at help-wanted advertisements—when Colonel Harbison met with a serious accident in a steeplechase—and Matalea married the apparently dying man at the hospital.

FIVE years later Lucinda was living in a pretentious New York apartment with her mother and her second stepfather, old Colonel Harbison, and Matalea was persuading the Colonel to spend the money requisite for a coming-out party for Lucinda—a party which Lucinda didn't want, but which was none the less given



By

Wallace Irwin

Illustrated by Henry Raleigh

ostentatiously, with the aid of a society coach Vera Cromwell, at the Ritz. Among the college students who "crashed the gate" uninvited was her old acquaintance Martin Cole. And—so it was that love came to Lucinda. (*The story continues in detail:*)

"I DON'T want to get married." It was as if she had emblazoned it on her crest, embroidered it on the pennant with which she confronted the world.

Her winter season was passing, with some success, from Matalea's point of view. Lucinda's first appearance had made its impression; she was too pretty to lie neglected, even in Manhattan's gallery of spoiled bachelors. Vera Cromwell, now frankly in Matalea's employ, saw to it that young men—eligibles—who appeared once should come again. When Willie Harbinger proposed a theater party at the Kettle Drum Revue it so impressed

Matalea that she was amiable for days; her attitude toward Lucinda changed for a time to one of wonder and respect.

Lucinda never quite forgot that evening at the Kettle Drum. It was preluded by a dinner at Louis Sherry's with Willie Harbinger, giggling but still quite sober, on her right; in his vacancy and his slimness he reminded her of some small wood instrument. Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson Clarkett had come by Vera's manipulation; they were one of New York's recent social acquisitions and paid thirty thousand dollars a year for their Park Avenue apartment; Jeff Clarkett was bald and sartorial; Mollie Clarkett was a dark, sleek beauty, obsessed with her own importance. "She never unbends," thought Lucinda, "not even when she's in bed. . . ." Then there was the silent, blond Mr. Fry, who danced so well; he turned out to be a corporation lawyer of some importance. He came frequently to the Harbison apartment to sit ponderously, delivering slow opinions. . . .

The girl and her mother were late for the dinner. This was Pelig's fault; since his trip to Southampton in a winter drizzle, he had suffered with lumbago. He liked to have his back rubbed. Scorning a trained nurse or a *masseur*, he called testily for Matalea whenever the pains began. His attacks came on usually when she was dressing to go somewhere. "Rub my back!"—a signal which rang like a tocsin. Everything must be dropped; the wife must fly to her ailing husband.

That night, as they rode toward Sherry's, she was pathetic to her daughter, pathetic as well as irritating. She seemed to have

given up her struggle for youth and was becoming frankly middle-aged. In the dimness of her car her face peered out, hatchet thin above her deep sable collar. And the girl who was happy that night with the calm, triumphant happiness that makes saints and martyrs, had come to pity the poor rich woman, wasting her life in a vain waiting for Methuselah to die. Lucinda had seen Martin again that afternoon. They had not spoken a word of love, yet she had left him full of a great assurance.

But what had been happening to her mother? What new humiliation had she endured behind the spacious, pretentiously noble walls of her apartment? She had married to become a widow. Vera had once said that Pelig's insistence upon life was in wretched bad taste. Yes, but it was more than that. It was a constant, twisting cruelty, the turning of a rack that agonizes for a long time and does not quite kill. Marriage. . . .

UPON an impulse Lucinda put out her hand and touched her mother's fingers; Matalea recoiled from the caress.

"Lucinda," she said in a tired, brittle voice, "what does this college boy intend to do? He seems to be hanging around all the time. He's nice enough, but I think you ought to be more careful with him. I don't know where he comes from, and he certainly hasn't any position. He'll begin getting all sorts of queer notions in his head."

"I like him very much."

"It's all right to like him. I haven't any objections to your playing around with him. He'll do to cut your eyeteeth on. But be careful, or he'll misunderstand."

"I don't think he will," said Lucinda.

"I'm glad of that." Matalea brightened. "Because I want to be proud of you when you're married."

Proud of her. She would be proud of her if she married money, and a name. Lucinda squirmed.

So they went to Willie Harbinger's dinner party, then packed themselves into two cars and rolled through the belch of automobile exhaust, the devil-cries of horns, the infernal picture-lamps of Broadway until they stopped at a blinding cavern which called itself the Kettle Drum Theater and advertised more girls and more laughs than Thespis has ever gathered together since the business man grew tired and the drama went out of fashion.

Lucinda was aware of musical sounds, more or less dissonant, and of acres of silver gauze through which demi-nude women writhed their pinkish bodies. A famous comedian exchanged Lambs Club wit with two rather less famous comedians. A funny woman with a big mouth unjointed her legs and sang a Yiddish version of "The End of a Perfect Day." Vaguely soaring away, in her own chosen Paradise, Lucinda heard and saw. Once she descended sufficiently to wonder if poor Daddy, disappointed in all his expectations, was wandering through a *revue* somewhere, making improper puns in a forest of dimpled knees.

But mostly her thoughts were still and deep and holy as an untroubled pool. She had found her man. Her new life lay in him. Wordlessly they had told each other how infinitely they loved. And she would see him again tomorrow. . . .

"Great Scott!" chuckled Jeff Clarkett, who had been sitting pop-eyed in the chair next to hers, never missing a ripple of the chorus who writhed toward the footlights in bare legs and frothing chemises. "That's a bunch! It certainly does put new life in an old married man!"

MARTIN and Lucinda met again in Morningside Park. They found a bench under the ledge of rock which just obscures the buttress of St. John's and the dome of St. Luke's on the height. Swinging down the lofty steps to find her, he came, pipe in mouth, book in arm; he looked more than ever the collegian, so eager and so young—so frighteningly young. February had brightened and false spring was in the air; sparrows pecked along the walk, brazen little counterfeits of forest birds.

"I cut a lecture and ran most of the way," he explained triumphantly.

"You're cutting too many classes," she told him, but made poor work of looking severe.

"Oh, Artie Cunningham's taking notes for me. I've done the same for him a lot of times."

He chatted lightly, pleasantly of his undergraduate interests, his working and his shirking. He had a theme to write—something about Taine as a human observer. He was doing pretty well with his bookkeeping. The *Spectator* was giving him more work than usual. The editor had hurt himself in the gym.

Through all this his eyes were worshipping her, filling her with an almost unbearable sense of joy. Yet her voice remained keyed

to his, lightly questioning, lightly answering. Suddenly she asked: "Martin, have you decided about Dr. Milling?"

"He's decided for me, I guess," he growled, growing moody. "He's off on an expedition in Alaska. I guess he's gone to get away from the phone."

"Why don't you go on a newspaper?" she offered, aching to help him.

"Everybody's doing it," he said. "We'll graduate enough journalists this year to stock half the newspapers in the United States. I'm not afraid of competition, I mean. But I want—what *do* I want?"

"You ought to be a writer."

"Why? Because I write a good letter?" His sarcasm stung.

"I'm not silly enough to think that."

"Of course you're not, Cinders. But how'd you know I can write?"

"The way you talk. The way you think."

"There are lots too many writers already," he decided in his young-old way. "Thousands of people at work, trying to say the same old things in a new way."

"Isn't that all life is?" she asked softly.

"Yes. I think so." He pondered the question an instant.

"Cinders, you have a way of hitting the nail on the head. But if life's that, what's the use of a lot of writers, telling us what we already know? There's nothing new to be said. Or if there is—and I can find a way to say it—I'll try. But I don't want to be a hack."

He said this all wisely, quite conscious that undergraduates have said the same thing, in many languages, since the world began.

"You'd never be a hack," she assured him, her eyes deep in his.

"But I want to be productive." It was gloriously romantic to hear him say this. "I want to go somewhere—to give something to the world. Not a middle-man—they're leeches. Everything goes through a hundred middle-men—" He leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, his old hat cocked awry, as he considered a worn economic point which apparently had often troubled him.

LUCINDA'S heart was responding wildly. "We'll go somewhere and be productive. We'll give something to the world—" How she wished for a competence with which to launch him in a world which he longed to benefit!

"Cinders," he muttered, suddenly looking up, "there was something you said yesterday. You've said it so often."

"What, Martin?" Her breath caught. She stirred uneasily.

"You said you weren't ever going to get married. Is that so, Cinders?"

"I think it is." She looked at him steadily now.

"But why?" He pulled his long body upright and studied her uncomprehendingly. Then with a curious break in his voice: "I don't mean myself, Cinders. If you knew how thankful I am—what heaven it's been— But of course I can't count."

"What makes you think so?" Her eyes were swimming and she was weak with feeling.

"How could I, Cinders?"

"I don't know." Then almost in a whisper: "But you do."

"You know I love you?" he asked.

Her voice was gone, but she nodded her head.

"And you—"

"Yes, Martin." She said it thickly. Tears had filmed her eyes.

"Then listen to me, Cinders." He was leaning over her as she looked fixedly at the point of her shoe. "I want you to forget all this highflown tommyrot I've just been spouting. I know a dozen things I can do. Old Stern's crazy to put me on his trade journal. Wait till I get my degree—we can wait till then, can't we, Cinders?"

"No."

"Then to hell with college," he said eagerly. "We'll go to a J. P. today. Tomorrow. Whenever you say."

"Martin—" She put her hand shyly on his arm. "I know I love you more than anything else in the world. But we can't ever marry. I couldn't."

"Why not?" He straightened up, his face a knot of puzzled wrinkles. "You mean there's somebody else? Has your mother been—"

"Not yet," she said. "But even if she does, I won't marry him. I won't."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

And this was partly true. In her troubled mind she had not yet formulated the philosophy which a seamy life had forced upon her. . . .

Lucinda's love-affair was patchy; but for her the patches stood

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she seemed to hold a complete ignorance. Possibly she disdained to think of a daughter of hers seriously considering a self-supporting student with a taste for sociology.

She had, at least, no inkling of the frequent meetings, quickly snatched, eagerly enjoyed, in public parks, on bus-tops, in motion-picture theaters, on the portico of the Columbia Library. Martin was a filler-in, no more, no less. Lucinda was using him to cut her teeth on. These decisions were so like Matalea. She was all too busy that winter, and becoming querulous. Pelig's back was growing no better, and he chose the most disagreeable hours possible for her to rub it.

When spring was in the air and tulips were beginning to sprout

out like brilliant isles of color. In the busy life of a working student with many irons in the fire, Martin could only snatch odd hours in which to see her; evenings were usually out of the question. Matalea saw to that, and Vera was her able lieutenant. It was Miss Cromwell who arranged that Miss Shelby should be proposed for the Junior League, admitted and put to work in bazaars and charity performances; who arranged that the affair with Willie Harbinger should not pale into nothing, but that premature rumors of their engagement should be whispered about; who arranged that Colonel Fair's opera box should be the Harbisons' Mondays, as well as Wednesdays.

In Martin Cole the experienced Vera saw nothing more formidable than a well-mannered college boy who could, in a pinch, be used as a filler-in. He filled in successfully on two occasions and Matalea approved of him; she praised him to Lucinda with the air of one who has invited a burglar and found he has gone home without stealing the spoons. Of the true relations between the boy and girl

She wouldn't be old. The flame
was still with her.

around the Plaza fountain, Lucinda learned that Ashton Brock was playing in a one-act sketch at Keith's. She felt that she must see him. That afternoon her mother was playing bridge. She took a sub-

way to Broadway, and among the photographs in the theater lobby saw Daddy's benevolent face, its character weakened by retouchings. Yet the poor copy opened a well of affection in her heart; it had been nearly a year since the last of his brave letters had come to her.

He was ninth on the program and followed a comedy-juggling performance by the Sure Fire Finnegans. Then came "Old Hundred," a young newspaper man's version of a modern home about to be corrupted by a dancing villain. The heroine has been away a day too long; her honor is at stake. Then slowly, creakily on the stage comes *Old Hundred* in a greasy coat and a floppy G. A. R. hat. Daddy.



Lucinda found herself crying at the quavering sentimentality of the dotard's monologue. So this was what Daddy had come to! He had yielded to the inevitable—an old-man part. Yet he wasn't so very old—not much over fifty. There was conviction, genuine pathos in the words as he spoke them. . . .

"Take it from an old vet, girl. I fit my battles and got my wounds when I was your age. Ye don't git nothin' that's good out of the way ye're goin', Nell." . . . A stout woman in the next seat blew her nose noisily.

Lucinda went back of the stage. She had to squeeze past competing actors and their hangers-on. Three fleecy Russian wolf-hounds nosed her hand and turned up their lambent eyes while their trainer, a little Italian in red plush, jerked them to attention. . . . A woman in an evening gown, a tinselled bandeau around her chemically colored hair, tiptoed back and forth whispering: "Bill!"

The door of Daddy's dressing-room was partly open, and through a chink she could catch a glimpse of his well-remembered form. "Come in!" he sang out, responsive to her knock. It was a minute before he looked around. "Oh, hello," he began, pleasant and puzzled. Then, "Why, it's Cinders!" and she was in his arms, being petted and laughed over.

"My, Lord!" he cried, his eyes moist. "How tall you are! You've grown like—"

"Like a weed."

"Like a lily. Last time I saw you you were sort of walking

around on stilts. But I stuck up for you, didn't I, Cinders? How did you know I was in town?"

"I read the papers all the time. I knew you'd just have to come this way, sooner or later. It's been ages since I've heard from you. I couldn't write you, because I didn't know where you were."

His look sobered; the actor's lines in his cheeks deepened to heavy creases.

"It's hard for me to remember the places I've been," he said. "San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Melbourne, Sydney, Capetown—I've toured the world in stock. Now I'm back in vaudeville." With a whimsical smile he picked up the G. A. R. coat. "I'll bet all my granddads rolled over in their graves when I put this on. How did you like my act?"

"It made me cry," she said.

"Cinders, you're the sweetest child I ever had." He gave her a rough hug, then led her to a chair, cleared it of a pair of shoes, a wig, a theatrical magazine. "You've got something on your mind. Is it your mother?"

"No. She's all right." Then she began to flounder with the complex problem which Matalea always presented. "I mean—well, she seems to get along. I think she has to stand a lot, though."

"And she stands it?" Lucinda nodded. "Queer," said Daddy. The rest was left unsaid. With Ike Shelby, who had shown her all the kindness in his nature, she had endured nothing. With



"Get out of here," Pelig howled. "The whole lot of you make me sick!"

"How'd you guess it?" He brightened. "Dan Bailey's turning my sketch into four acts. Ben Irish has seen it and he thinks we've got a big hit. We go into rehearsal after I've finished my tour—"

"And you'll get a flat, and I'll pick out the furniture for you. You couldn't ever do it yourself."

"God bless you, Cinders, that's a bargain," said Daddy, patting her hand. "Now look here. What's on your mind? You wanted to talk to me about getting married."

"Daddy," she began, locking her fingers under her chin and regarding him earnestly, "I've found the boy. I can't tell you how much we mean to each other."

"You don't need to," he mused, his eyes following his fingers as they brushed cake-crumbs into a little triangle on the table.

"We see each other almost every day. It's mostly behind Mother's back. She doesn't like him very well."

"What does he do?" asked Ike Shelby, looking up from his cake-crumbs.

"He's a student. He graduates this spring. But he hasn't a cent."

"Of course that isn't holding you back?" Something like disapproval was in his kind blue eyes.

"No, Daddy. I'm not afraid of being poor. I'd love to work. I've always wanted to."

"You'd better marry him just as soon as he graduates; don't worry too much about the money end of it. If you ever get in a tight corner, remember this—I'm making more money than I know how to spend."

"You darling!" she whispered, and came over to kiss him on his seamy cheek. "But Martin and I can go on our own—I'm sure of that. I mean, if we ever get married."

"What's that?" He twisted around and looked at her in grave concern.

"Daddy," she said wistfully, "you've seen so much more than I have. And this is what I so want you to tell me. Have you ever seen a really happy marriage?"

He pondered this deliberately, thoughtfully, and again began playing with the crumbs.

"I never had to answer a question like that before," he declared. "There's Minnie Fitzhugh—you know, she's a fine woman. When she got married I thought it was going to last. No, it didn't." He mused again mentally, counting heads. "Maybe I'm not a fair judge. In the theatrical business, you know, it's here today, there tomorrow. But there must be a great many happy ones. Well, see here—" His look kindled to a pleasant discovery. "There was my mother. I think her marriage was ideal. There wasn't a cross word or a scene or a complaint all the time I can remember. But of course she was an unusually lovely woman—"

"How old were you when she died?"

"Let me see." Daddy considered. "I was nearly thirteen, I think."

"Weren't you too young then to really know what was going on? Couldn't your mother and your father have kept almost anything from a boy of that age? When I was thirteen, I believed everything."

(Continued on page 157)

Pelig Harbison, physically repulsive, cruel and unforgiving, she was enduring everything.

"Now what have you got to tell your Daddy?" he twinkled, forcing himself out of a momentary sadness. "You're through school?"

"Yes, Daddy. I finished last spring."

"Don't tell me you've gone and got married!"

"That's what I wanted to talk about," she said with a sudden catch in her breath.

BECAUSE place must be given to another actor in another act, he took her to his rooms over a restaurant in West Forty-eighth Street, and there they sat before a coal grate while a waiter from downstairs brought up tea and French pastry and buttered toast. The narrow space with its makeshift divan, spotted carpet and dusty theatrical photographs blossomed like a carnival.

"You seem settled here," she said, considering how she might rearrange the furniture.

"Oh, this isn't mine. Dan Bailey—he's the man who wrote my sketch—stays here when he's in New York. He let me have the place during my run. I get so tired of hotels, Cinders. I like a room where I can cook my toes by an open fire."

"Poor Daddy!" This only in her thoughts. Then she spoke aloud: "But you'll have a nice apartment of your own when you're starrin' in a big play."



MISS SEIFERT, who watches life's parade from her New York window, is another newcomer into the ranks of short-story writers to be reckoned with. Though this is her first story for this magazine, it is not likely to be her last—for which you will be grateful when you have read it.

Mr. Tilton sighed. "Not one lady in a dozen shows proper care in drying her hose."

Two Singles Close Together

By Shirley Seifert

Illustrated by

Kenneth V. Camp

HE was a specialist in ladies' footwear. Truly! Only the dull-est wit would have called him a shoe-clerk. Even the word *salesman* would not suggest his gentle, dignified assurance or the extent of his following. A salesman is a go-getter; Mr. Tilton was of those who also serve but only stand and wait. At any hour from nine in the morning until five-thirty in the afternoon you might see him gliding with his seemingly hurried step over the deep-napped carpet on the second floor of the De Luxe Booterie, shoes, boots, slippers heaped in his arms or poised on the tips of his long fingers, according to delicacy of texture; and every time he passed the latticed window effect which was the false door of the elevator, the floor manager standing there would say:

"A call for you, Mr. Tilton, please."

And Mr. Tilton would answer with fine abstraction:

"Sorry. In a minute. Busy at present."

Certainly he was a specialist. The cream of the De Luxe

patronage, from great-grandmothers who had to be helped in by chauffeurs, to boarding-school flibbertigibbets, depended on him, deferred to him.

His looks had nothing to do with his popularity. No, not even with the grandmothers. I have never observed that age reduced a woman's susceptibility to masculine charm. He was obviously an unloved bachelor of at least forty years. His head had grown bald in an even, unharried style, the shiny coin spot at the crown widening year by year in a sneaking fashion. His mild blue eyes suggested no torments of ambition, no problems of domestic economy. His mustache grew longer than any wife of his choice would have permitted; and over a long, lean figure, made not so much supple as well-hinged by his daily exercises of sitting down and getting up again and climbing the length of wheeled ladders, he draped garments of spinster neatness and a monotonous gray.

His customers often remarked to one another that they never thought of him as a man; they simply couldn't, don't you know!

But he was a man, very much a man. He had his visions, his dreams, his thoughts, his yearnings—all that goes to make up that intangible ganglion called a soul. If he spoke a language of calfskin and rhinestones and vamps, why, his speech was only a little more limited than other people's; that's all.

One day when he was waiting upon a very expensive, handsome lady known in the society journals as Mrs. Winthrop Johns, she all unwittingly, before or afterward, touched the secret spring. Mr. Tilton had fitted to her feet a lovely pair of pumps, silver and blue brocade, which called for the utmost luxury in delicate blue hosiery. Both man and woman considered closely the slender aristocracy of foot and ankle under discussion, but any personal warmth was on the side of the customer.

"Dear me!" she sighed. "How extravagant we are nowadays! I can remember when I came out, how thrilled I was to have a half dozen pairs of silk stockings presented to me to wear for best dress, to have two pairs of party slippers at one time, one light and one dark, two pairs of street shoes, one best and one second best. Now, I have whole trays of shoes and never the right ones. And I'm always fussing around after stockings to match. Such fragile stockings, too! Flimsy and lasting as cobwebs!"

Mr. Tilton did not raise his eyes from the lady's ankles.

"The durability of silk hosiery," he observed in a colorless tone, "depends largely on the manner of washing. They must be laundered after each wearing, of course—"

"You amazing man!" interrupted Mrs. Johns. "Do you even know how to wash stockings?"

"Ah, yes!" sighed Mr. Tilton. "That is very important. The water should be just tepid, not cold, for that takes no effect on the—er—perspiration residue, and not hot, for that kills the silk. Soap must never touch the material. The suds should be prepared before you dip the hose. Then souse them up and down and squeeze the water out in rinsing. Do not ever twist a wet stocking. And do not hang them carelessly. Most ladies hang up stockings by the toe or the top. Both methods are bad for shape and even drying. The foot should be smoothed out and the leg, and then the stocking fastened to the line by the heavily reinforced heel—"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Johns. "You'd have to tell it to my maid. I couldn't remember all that!"

"I know." Mr. Tilton sighed and raised his eyes to the lady's face. "I live in an apartment-house myself. There are little iron balconies all over the walls, one leading from each kitchen to a fire-escape. Perhaps you have observed them. The ladies find these balconies convenient places for drying small personal

washings. I observe the hosiery in particular. Not one lady in a dozen shows proper care in drying her hose."

"No?" said Mrs. Winthrop Johns, fine eyebrows peaked, mouth tight but slightly aquiver. "No?"

Mr. Tilton's eyes were still trusting, appealing.

"No. There is one lady in particular. I think she is a widow. She lives alone on my floor directly across the center court. She is a most fastidious dresser, but not rich, I think. She washes bits of things almost daily. If she were only not so careless! She evidently does not know. Sometimes it is all I can do to keep from going to her and telling her about the hosiery, you know."

A pregnant silence fell on the fortunately secluded corner of the Booterie especially carpeted and upholstered for the display of delicacies in slippers.

"But she might not understand," allowed Mr. Tilton. "We are strangers."

Mrs. Johns achieved kindness in her smile.

"No," she said, "I don't believe she would. That would hardly do."

Mr. Tilton dropped his head to his business of fitting brocaded pumps to the foot of aristocracy.

"I will take them," said Mrs. Johns, her voice suggesting a sudden need for outer air. "Please have Miss Marguerite match them with hose and send them out."

"Thank you," said Mr. Tilton, when he had replaced her walking shoes. "Good day, Mrs. Johns."



"You terrible man!
What do you
know about my
stockings?"

He pressed the ivory button beside the latticed casement which was a false door to an elevator, bowed, and moved off to the rear of the store, the slippers delicately poised on the ends of his long fingers, his rear view just a shiny coin spot of baldness and narrow shoulders that sagged a little under a dull gray coat and trousers that hung a little long about the heels.

Mrs. Johns kept her handkerchief over her mouth until she reached the street. Then she shook herself and let out a soft gurgle of utter mirth, which was a prelude to gales of laughter about a tea-table a bit later, when she diverted three understanding friends with her latest picture of that delicious Mr. Tilton of the Booterie, accosting a strange, but probably very sophisticated widow on the subject of wet stockings.

Mr. Tilton? Well, he saw the same picture with all the details that Mrs. Johns' wit could supply, except the humor. He could not laugh at the idea, having possessed it too long and intimately. Four months—a whole summer—of contemplation had brought him just to this point of seeking outer advice; and now, *thump!* Mrs. Johns' verdict had fallen, adding its weight to his own confirmations. His thoughts, his desires, his fears, his yearnings, were like so many little cucumbers in brine upon which a capable housewife sets a crockery plate and adds thereto a rock from the garden.

MR. TILTON went through the rest of the afternoon's work with typical quiet and dispatch. In the evening he stopped for dinner, as he did three hundred and fifty of the days in a year, at the best of the four restaurants prospering in the West End, thanks to hordes of efficient cliff-dwellers. He ate roast veal with dressing, potatoes, corn, plum pie à la mode and coffee, and then went on to his particular apartment, his depression deepening.

His post-office address mentioned a boulevard with a high-sounding French name, which went very well with strangers; but when he told the street and number to one who knew the city, that one said, "Oh, the Ghetto!" Not on Mr. Tilton's account, but from the general character of the multitude accommodated in his block, for instance. Statistics proved that more people lived in a given ground area there than in the most squalid, congested tenement section downtown. But, to Mr. Tilton, rising from a succession of malodorous boarding-houses with poor heating plants and defective plumbing, his sitting room with a plain carpet, a chair, a couch, a lamp and a wall-bed, his tiled bathroom with oceans of hot water always available, his narrow kitchenette with its Juliet balcony, had held until lately all the splendors of a palace. All the first months that he lived there he kept the bathroom door wide open into his public living-room for the sheer joy of beholding his possessions. When he turned the key in the outer door of an evening, he was a prince, a potential hero, a householder, at least. I think Mr. Tilton really never did have entity as a man until he leased this apartment. Each morning, for a modest gratuity, a maid came in to make his bed and clear up after his breakfast and shine his porcelain, or dust when necessary. Otherwise no man or woman might enter here without his say-so—and no man or woman did.

Perhaps that explains why lately the apartment had begun strangely to grow dull. Mr. Tilton was not a man to weary of a thing because he at length possesses it. Might it have been the restaurant bill-of-fare? At any rate, this evening instead of lighting the reading lamp and gently worshipping the romantic pool of light which it threw over his chair, a bit of gray carpet and a foot or so of gleaming parquetry floor, he tossed his newspaper carelessly on the table and went on through to the kitchenette, vaguely, with no conscious purpose. He had a little feeling in his stomach and his head was dull. However, being in the kitchen, the next thing was the iron fire-escape balcony. A glance told him that no one else was taking a similar airing on the court. So he stepped outside.

The widow, presumably, was out. She went out a great deal, he had noticed. The curtain to her kitchen was down tight, as she had drawn it against the afternoon sun, showing that she had cooked no evening meal there. But her washing was still on the line, as usual. Sometimes it hung out all night, giving Mr. Tilton both an evening and a morning wince in his professional knowledge. Tonight there were only two pairs of stockings, but they were eloquent. The black pair had been hung carelessly too near the wall. The wind had blown one while still damp up against the rough architectural brick and it had clung there. The pulled threads could be well imagined. Mr. Tilton winced at the black stockings, but the gray pair gave him a shiver entirely new. They hung improperly by their toes and one of them had a long, black darn which must have come precariously close to a shoe rim.

Now, when a lady darns a stocking with thread that does not match, it may mean carelessness; but it is more apt to mean penury. Mr. Tilton had never thought of the widow—how he knew her for a widow beats me—as darning anything she wore, let alone being short of materials for mending. She was the gayest sort of person, with crinkly black hair touched up with silver, all unexpected frills on her dresses, who usually sang while she committed solecisms on the wash-line. That she should darn gray stockings with black thread!

But the darn did one thing. It nerved Mr. Tilton to his purpose. Tell her now about the stockings he must! If she were poor, she could not afford to misuse her wearing apparel so. She would be angry, of course, misunderstand, as he had always known she would. She would say:

"How dare you! Outrageous man, what do you know about silk stockings? What business is it of yours how I hang—leave the place at once!"

But she might remember a little of what he could tell her. Mr. Tilton struck his hands together with a mighty resolution—and just then the widow appeared. She was utterly radiant in a demure black dress with sparkling buttons and a small black hat that also sparkled somewhere. She did not see Mr. Tilton. At least she did not look at him. She never did. She saw first the plight of the black stocking. Ah! She gave a gasp of dismay, quickly but ineffectually covered with a flirt of hysterical laughter. Then, for the first time in all these months, she did turn and look directly at Mr. Tilton. Seeing him standing there, gaping and anxious and most rudely staring, she quite naturally tossed her head and her eyes flashed to him what he knew her lips would reply if she knew what he would say: "What business is it of yours, smarty?"

Softly Mr. Tilton slipped through the door into the shadows of his apartment. He was mistaken. It was not simple and businesslike, for all its impersonal, humanitarian kindness of intent, for him to tell her about her stockings. He'd never have the nerve for it.

But he remembered and remembered the black darn in the gray toe. And so presently he got out a sheet of notepaper—a bit of a Christmas present left over. Heaven knows he wrote few letters. But he would write to the widow—anonously, selflessly—tell her what was in his heart. He would begin by announcing his professional qualifications and then proceed.

He spoiled the sheet of paper for future use by writing in a date line, and then he halted before another obstacle. Whoever heard of a letter anonymous at both ends? He didn't know her name. He couldn't get it except by inquiry of a gossiping house manager or a loose janitor. He might write the note and in the dead of night slip about and tuck it under her door. He might in that case be shot by the janitor for a prowler, or worse, get the note under the wrong door, be caught by an irate husband or some other scandalous thing. He was the kind of innocent on whom such things do fall. Did you ever try picking the right brown door, in a long plastered wall, when you weren't positive about the number?

He tore up the fair sheet of paper. And finally, being in the last ditch of contempt for his own ineffectuality, he went to a picture show. Sometimes, he thought with feeble, flickering hope, pictures were full of clever ideas. He might get an inspiration.

DID you ever think of God attending a movie show? He went to this one, all right.

So did everybody else in Mr. Tilton's neighborhood. It was a Friday and a popular he-man actor was doing the romance of a heart-broken pirate. Mr. Tilton arrived late for seats. The auditorium was filled. So was the pen behind the barriers. Across the aisle entrances had been stretched ropes against which pressed an overanxious, milling bunch of men, women and children. Mr. Tilton became anxious himself before he passed beyond that rope. It was a sort of fever that you caught. Each little group admitted stirred up more and more a feeling of injury, a sense of bitter competition. The usher boy was such a snip! So lordly his way of unhooking his rope to release satisfied old patrons and let in new ones by exact count! So arrogant his shouts of "Four! Three! Two! A single!"

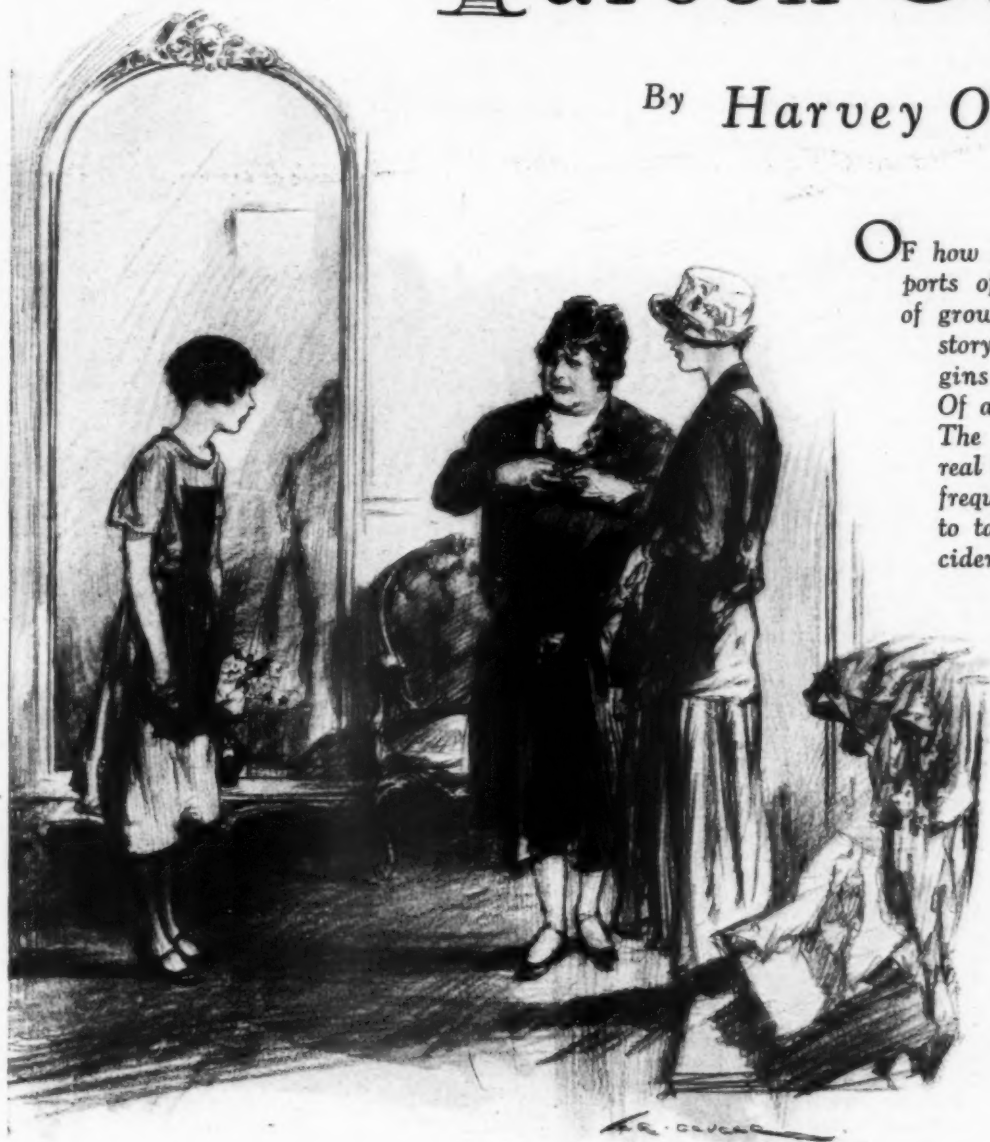
But Mr. Tilton, watching, found his cue. He would have to trickle in on the edge of a three or a five or might get a rare "single!" Twos and fours he could ignore, but he became keen at the cry of an odd number. He made several primitive rushes at these summonses, and by the time he too leaned hard against the rope, he had established a first-class feud with a broad-chested, red-haired woman at the head (Continued on page 150)

Illustrated by
Frederic R. Gruger

The Famous Parson Case

By Harvey O'Higgins

OF how many newspaper reports of alleged kidnappings of grown girls is some such story as this by Mr. O'Higgins likely to be the truth? Of a good many, perhaps. The difficulty is that in real life there is all too infrequently a Detective Duff to take up the case. Incidentally, readers of these stories of his exploits will be interested to learn that this winter he is likely to appear on the stage in a play his creator has written about him.



The girl admitted that she had not delivered the dress.

AS the daily editorials said, it was as if the crowded sidewalk of Fifth Avenue, on a Saturday noon, had opened under the feet of Isabel Parson and swallowed her whole. She had walked out of Foyer's shop, near Thirty-fourth Street, with her purchases, and vanished. She had ceased to exist, as suddenly as if she had been struck on Foyer's threshold by some mysterious thunderbolt that had silently annihilated her, blown her into invisible atoms, destroyed her without leaving a trace. At one moment she was a handsome young girl, in smart spring clothes, on her way from her parents' apartment in Park Avenue to a week-end visit on Long Island, with a little fitted "week-end case" in her hand. A moment later, she had dropped out of sight into some undiscoverable abyss; and neither her frantic relatives, nor the police, nor a thousand eager newspaper reporters, could find a reasonable explanation of what had become of her.

The family chauffeur had driven her, in her father's limousine, from the door of the apartment house in Park Avenue to the Harriman National Bank in Forty-fourth Street. At the bank, she drew out several hundred dollars from her pin-money account. The chauffeur motored her, then, down Fifth Avenue to Foyer's, and there she told him that he need not wait. "I'll take a taxi to the station," she explained. He saw her go into Foyer's. Apparently, she intended to buy herself a silk sweater in Foyer's, but she did not find any that she liked. She bought, instead, a suit of silk pajamas, a negligée, and some underclothes that proved irresistible. With these in her week-end case, she walked out blithely—into whatever bottomless gulf had swallowed her.

Her friends on Long Island waited till Sunday morning before they telephoned to ask why she had not arrived. By Sunday noon her worried father was calling up the hospitals and

the police. The newspapers got the story Sunday night, and they were short of news, so they spread it on the front page Monday morning. They described her as "an heiress," a "Fifth Avenue girl," a "prominent debutante," a young personage of wealth and fashion. According to them, she had everything in the world that a happy girl could wish. They could discover no shadow of a reason why she should have run away. Consequently, they decided that she had been kidnaped and carried off into some criminal den of white slaves. Her photograph showed her appealingly pretty and spirited—an alert and breezy dark girl with a boyish bob—and she looked at you from the printed page with an air of confident youth and privileged security that made it horrible to think of her as attacked, betrayed, tortured, suffering.

It happened that one ingenious editor had been crusading for a better police control of taxi drivers, and he scented something fruitful in her statement to her chauffeur that she would finish her trip to the railroad station in a taxicab. So, on the following night, while one of his reporters was standing at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street, a fainting woman flung herself from the door of a passing taxi, and gasped out a terrible story of how she had felt herself losing consciousness in the cab and discovered a rubber tube beside her from which a flow of faintly sweet-smelling poisonous gas was slowly stupefying her. She had called to the chauffeur to stop. He had put on speed. She had fallen against the door, too weak to open it, struggling feebly with the handle. And then the brakes were clamped on with a jerk as the cab was caught in a jam of traffic at Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, and the sudden jolt threw her weight on the handle, and the door flew open, and she fell out.

The reporter caught her. He might have caught the taxi driver, but before he could understand from her what had happened, the cab had darted forward again and disappeared.

As his paper said next morning, she had been almost "Isabel Parsoned" within sight of Foyer's. And by the time the evening editions issued, a new terror had been added to the imaginary dangers of life in New York. The "lethal taxicab" had been invented—the lethal taxicab that prowled about the streets at night, a chamber of horrors on wheels, diabolically prepared to catch unprotected girls in all their happy innocence and carry them, drugged and helpless, to the infernal regions of the underworld.

It was a more plausible myth than the "kissing bug" of eighteen-ninety-nine that stung beautiful actresses on the lips and left them to faint away in the streets. It was more terrifying than the "poison needle" of a decade later, that was jabbed into poor girls in the subway rush, with the result that the unsuspecting victim, having felt only a pin prick in her arm, began to grow faint and dizzy, accepted aid from a stranger who caught her as she staggered, and slowly lapsed into a walking trance from which she woke heaven knows where. Compared to these earlier sensationalisms, the lethal taxicab was an invention of genius. It not only tapped the romantic emotions of all the suppressed Puritans for whom tales of white slavery had a horrid fascination; it appealed to the animosity of every timid soul who had ever been cheated by a taximeter; and it revived the resentment of every pedestrian who had been almost run down (and completely bawled out) by a careless taxi driver. The papers became daily melodramas, full of Isabel Parson and the lethal taxicab, with diagrams to show how the deadly gas could be piped from a tank under the driver's seat into the cab. They all but provoked a riot, with mobs of lynchers pursuing fleeing taxies up and down the howling streets.

Among the New Yorkers who read these stories skeptically, one of the most skeptical was Detective Duff. He knew something about New York's underworld. He knew that it was governed by the same commercial laws that ruled the rest of the town. He knew that the supply of girls in it was greater than the demand, that the girls had to practice the same arts of salesmanship as a book agent, that Isabel Parson as a white slave was as impossible as an insurance solicitor in chains.



"She leaped out o' bed, an' she said, 'Tell me, then, who am I?' An' I told her."

"People," he complained, "are so darned romantic about vice. They don't seem to realize that it's a business. These girls have as much trouble making a living as the rest of us. It's only the cleverest of them that ever earn more than day's wages. You might as well talk of kidnaping girls and selling them as clerks to department stores. Pickles! This Parson girl ran away, or I'm a sap."

He came out with these judgments flat-footedly to anyone who mentioned the Parson case. He had no hesitation in voicing them. He never expected to be involved in the Parson case himself. And he was contemptuously frank in expressing his opinions to a stranger named Ewing who called on him in his office with a



letter of introduction, one morning at the height of the Parson furore, when Ewing naturally got to gossiping about the Parson case after his own small trouble had been laid on Duff's desk.

Duff was not impressed by Ewing. Ewing had an exterior that was prosperous and fat and self-important—the exterior of a successful, self-made man of money—but out of his eyes there looked another sort of person altogether. He had a way of staring at you too fixedly. His gray hair was brushed back too defiantly from his forehead. He seemed too aggressively clean-shaven. He held his mouth in a stern expression and frowned all the time, but behind his forbidding mask Duff seemed to see a frightened small boy confronting the big bully, life, with a

show of facing him down. In spite of everything, Ewing's features were weak and white and soft; and his eyes were as if steeled against his own timidity.

At Duff's declaration that the Parson girl must have run away, Ewing asked, glowering: "What makes you think she ran away?"

"She drew money enough to run away with, didn't she?" Duff replied. "She had a suitcase, and nobody knows what was in it. She knew she wouldn't be missed for four or five hours, didn't she? And she bought the sort of things a girl takes with her when she elopes. Her father must be a darn fool, or he'd know where she went and who went with her."

And at that, Ewing turned red in a stare of mortified rage. "Look here," he said hoarsely, "my name's not Ewing. It's Parson. I'm her father."

Duff's first impulse was to laugh. He did not yield to it. He glared at Parson almost as malevolently as Parson glared at him. "Where is she?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Who's with her?"

"I don't know that either."

They bristled like a pair of unfriendly dogs, eying each other angrily—only Duff was a large and shaggy mastiff of a man whose growl was a sort of good-natured warning not to provoke a fight, and Parson had the peevish manner of a fat house-pet snarling to keep up its courage.

"Well," Duff said, "you're not suffering from the general delusion that she's been kidnaped, are you?"

He smiled dryly as he said it, and something in Parson weakened when he tried to outface that smile. He dropped his eyes. "No," he admitted. "I don't believe that."

"You think she ran away."

"Yes," he said sulkily, "I do."

"Why do you suppose she did it?"

"I don't know."

And he didn't know. Under Duff's continued questions, it became clearer and clearer that he didn't know. He had left the girl and her affairs to his wife, and there had been no more trouble between mother and daughter than there usually is in these days of rebellious youth. Neither he nor his wife knew of any lover to whom she might have fled. She had one recognized suitor, a Horace Chilton, well-to-do and eminently eligible, whom they had hoped that she might marry; but they had not tried to influence her; they had felt that she was still too young to consider marriage seriously. She was just out of school. They had wanted

her to go to college, but they did not insist on her going when she announced that she was sick of books and teachers. They let her stay home and take singing lessons. She was musical. She played the piano—chiefly jazz. And she was mad about dancing. During the past winter, she had been out to dances with Chilton on an average of three times a week. Chilton was a solid, sensible fellow, older than she; and when she refused to be chaperoned—because no girls were chaperoned any more; you might as well send her out with a governess—her mother had compromised by letting her go alone wherever Chilton took her.

"We gave her her own way," Parson complained bitterly. "In

everything we possibly could, we gave her her own way. We didn't even force her to go to church with us when she said she didn't want to any more. We didn't interfere with her reading, and she was free to go to matinees by herself. We didn't want her out at night alone, especially at these so-called 'clubs' where young people dance and drink till all hours, but we even let her go there if Horace took her, and we didn't ask any questions about it."

Duff watched him while he talked. Here the man sat, at the heart of all the tragedy and mystery and emotion of the famous Parson case, a wholly commonplace and inadequate parent with a grievance. It was funny. It had all the burlesque quality of reality at its most real. The one emotion in Parson's shallow soul seemed to be resentment. He was angry at the girl, at her mother, at the police, at the newspapers, at the situation in which he found himself and at the world that saw him in that situation.

"Well," Duff asked, "what do you want me to do? Find her?"

"Yes. Of course I want you to find her."

Duff slumped down in his swivel chair, hunching up his shoulders, his chin on his chest. "It isn't going to be easy, or some one would've picked up her trail before this. She must've had her cover all ready before she started. If the police and the newspapers can't locate her, I haven't a chance—unless I can find some indication of where she was going, in her mind, before she went."

"In her mind?"

"Yes."

"Huh!" Parson grunted. "How are you going to do that?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," Duff admitted.

There was something about Parson that was "off normal," as Duff would have said; and Duff was puzzled to know what was the matter. Being puzzled, he avoided all appearance of being puzzled. He avoided any show of interest in Parson. He frowned gloomily at his desk calendar.

"Your wife," he said, "must be pretty well knocked out by this whole business. If she had a nervous breakdown, now, it'd be perfectly natural. And it'd be perfectly natural for you to hire a trained nurse to look after her. I want to put an operative in among your servants, and a trained nurse is the only sort of servant that wouldn't be suspected. I have a girl, a Miss Browning, who acts as a trained nurse. I use her in cases of this kind where the ordinary detective would stick out like a patrolman at a ball. If I can put her in your household, she'll work her way into the confidence of the servants—particularly the chauffeur—and find out whether they know anything they're holding back from you. I'll have to have somebody rope Chilton, too, and see whether he has anything. Your daughter may have dropped a hint to him that he hasn't noticed; she must've been planning this move for some time. But we'll have to keep under cover. I don't want the reporters to know I'm on the case, and I don't think we ought to tell the police."

"Damn the police," Parson broke out. "I shouldn't've told them in the first place. All my wife's cursed nonsense—"

"Ah," Duff said, suddenly illuminated, "you heard from the girl after you called in the police!"

"Now, look here," Parson blustered, "this is confidential. I'm not going to be made to look like a fool. You're not going to give it to the newspapers, and you're not going to tell the police. Let them find it out if they're so smart. They started all this talk about white-slave taxicabs, and they can finish it their own way."

"Certainly," Duff soothed him. "Quite so. What've you heard from her?"

He drew a note from his pocket and threw it angrily on Duff's desk. It was written in lead pencil, on a cheap ruled letter paper. And it read: "I am all right. Don't worry. And don't try to find me."

"When did you get this?"

"I didn't get it till Monday morning. It was posted to reach me Saturday, and it was either delayed in the mail or mislaid in



She replied, as if she did not see Duff: "She's gone

the house. I didn't see it till Monday morning, and by that time"—he made an impatient gesture of disgust at the ridiculous hullabaloo that had been raised around him—"I couldn't admit that she'd run away. It'd make me look like a fool. Besides, I thought that with all this publicity, some one would be sure to trace her, and I wanted her brought back."

Duff had been turning the note over in his fingers. "It came in an envelope, of course," he said.

Yes, of course, it had come in an envelope, but Parson had not dared to carry it around in its envelope for fear he might lose it from his pocket and betray himself. The note, without the envelope, did not give any name. No one could guess that it was from her. He had destroyed the envelope.

"Where was it postmarked?" Duff asked.

"New York."

"What post office?"

He did not remember.

"Well, it doesn't matter," Duff said. "If you'll get your wife to go to bed with a nervous breakdown, I'll prepare Miss Browning to take the case."

He rose to end the interview.



her own ways. She laughed at me. There in her bed, she laughed at me."

And as soon as he got rid of Parson—after fifteen minutes of last doubts and final reassurances—he called in Miss Browning.

"Martha," he said, "this crazy Parson case has come to us, very confidentially, and I'm turning it over to you. Between ourselves, the girl's parents are a couple of poor boobs apparently. They don't know anything about anything. There's something phony about their reactions to the girl's disappearance. I don't understand them. You'll have to trail back over their relations with the girl and give me a full report on it. And I want to know what's been going on in the girl's mind. See if you can't find a definite love-image for me. Trace back her action-patterns and see if we can't figure out, from *them*, what has become of her. It's our only chance. It's a psychological case, and we'll have to handle it psychologically, see?"

Martha Browning was a large and placid young woman who looked as little like a detective as the huge Duff himself. She listened to his instructions with the professional detachment of a newspaper "sob sister" taking an assignment from the city editor. "When do I go on it?" she asked.

"Sometime tonight or tomorrow morning. Parson's to phone me. I'll let you know later."

"All right," she said. "I'll have to make arrangements. I can't leave my mother alone."

"How is she?"

She smiled, quite humanly. "Oh, she's better, thanks."

She went off, to make her arrangements, and Duff turned to his office phone and asked for an operative named Bundy.

"Is that you, Charlie?" he said. "Well, listen. That crazy Parson case has come in, confidentially, and I want you to report, under cover, to Parson in his office, and let him put you next to a man named Chilton—Horace Chilton—the guy that the girl was supposed to be engaged to. I've a hunch that Chilton may know where she is." This was a lie, of course. "At any rate, I want you to find out what their relations have really been and what kind of a girl Chilton really thinks she is. You'll have to rope him. I don't know how you'll do it. Parson may be able to help you. All right. See you later."

SO Duff undertook the Parson case. And the longer he worked on it, the less it looked like the Parson case that was agitating the public mind. Though George E. Parson lived in a Park Avenue palace—in a fifteen-room (Continued on page 94)

A Flash of Fire

By Ruth Comfort Mitchell
and George Hopkins

Illustrated by C. D. Williams

All autumn Ruth Comfort Mitchell has been engaged upon the stories she is doing for this magazine, of which the present tale is the first to be published. And one may say that great strength of will is required actually to work in so lovely a spot as Ruth Mitchell calls home—which is an exquisitely beautiful Chinese house hanging on the side of a California mountain, south of San Francisco.

WELL, it could happen. (The Fat Lady spoke tolerantly, handing back to me the magazine.) It could, at that. (She eased one mountainous knee gently off the other and told the story.)

Cert'ny I fall for that doo-al personality stuff. I'll say. Seen it on the job. Look at April Day—yep, that's her real name. Larry Day was her dad's moniker or the one he was wearing at the time, and she come in April, and that was enough for her mother, which was sweet but kinda simple. Yes sir, *there* was two girls in one, and why not? Father was no good and mother was too good for any earthly use, and the kid a ringer for both, and easy to look at! Say, she was like a cherub off a Easter card. Remember once she'd give me the slip—she wasn't knee high to a duck—and I found her playing right under the elephants' feet and a fool woman cooing over her. "Oh," she says, "she looks like a little angel!" "Yes ma'am," I says, "and she acts like a little devil!"

Not that she wasn't a sweet-hearted young un; nothing she wouldn't give you or do for you—unless she was mad at you! There was days she'd be all Hazel Miller, and butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, and you couldn't hardly keep your eyes off'm her, and again she was all Larry Day and you couldn't hardly keep your hands off'm her! *Aggravating?* Say, I uster wonder what was the big idea with that old bird in the Bible, limiting the slaughter to the *male* infant!

And then, just as I'd be thinking something mean like that, she'd come swarming up in my lap, getting her arms around my neck—as far as they'd go. Called me "Aunt Annie," only she made it "An Tannie." Cute, the way she uster bring it out.

Yes sir, that kid's life would make a story good enough to print, and I always figured I was gonner do it myself some day, but you know how it goes! You get good'n' ready and there aint any paper, and the next time you're r'aring to go you spilled the ink, or some bum's forgot to return your pen. *You know!*

The stuff's all there for a story, I'll tell the world, me being on the inside and getting the low-down from all parties concerned.

Course, I was going to disguise names and places and all that. I was fixing to call her "June Knight" instead of April Day! Might do it yet, some winter . . . But chances are I wont never get started, so if it's any use to you—

Well, Larry Day was a balloonist and so on. Good-looking devil and a way with him or he never would 'a' got nice little choir-singing, piano-playing Hazel Miller to run off with him. I was wardrobe mistress then—had been, sixteen years. Me'n' Whit Hendy and the Old Man himself been with the show since it started. Seen Whit's Animal Act? Yep, it's a good show, all right, but Whit's a bad actor, Whit is. Learned his trade before this "All Done by Kindness" stuff come in style. He'd like to train me awhile, Whit would. Train me? Say, listen, he'd like to feed me to his lions in small hunks. But I don't know could you blame him, at that.

Well, I stood up with Hazel when she got married to that lizard, and I stood by her when the baby come along, and I buried her. And then I started to drag up her child in the way she should go, like I promised the poor dying thing I would. "I'll learn you to be a lady," I uster tell her, "if it takes a leg!"

It helped a lot when her dad died. I was sure relieved. It was him and Whit Hendy together that taught her the "Flash o' Fire" act. She wasn't but thirteen when they started her doing it. Say, it gives me gooseflesh on my stummick to think of it now!

Kid herself wasn't scared, though. *Loved* it! "Seems like I'm a bird or a fairy or an angel or something, An Tannie," she says to me once. "I just hate to come down, that's all."

I made her the cutest costume you ever see—scarlet with touches of yellow—regular flame effect, it was, with tights and little soft fluttery wings. She'd go up in a captive balloon and come down in a parachute with rockets shooting out of it and all sorts of fire effects. It was sure a classy act. It made the show. The Old Man was free to admit it, and he played it up big.

Well, say, as time went on, I uster fret a lot about getting her out of the life altogether. She was pretty as a picture and smart as a whip, and sweet like her mother, and tough like her dad, and



I made her the cutest costume you ever see
—scarlet and yellow, regular flame effect—
with tights and little soft fluttery wings.

it looked to me like a fifty-fifty break which way she'd turn out. If she was a handful at eight she was a armful at eighteen, or at least that's how the boys all figured, not to mention Whit Hendy. The boys didn't worry me much, though, of course, I was awful strict with her, they being nice, decent kids in the main. But here was Whit Hendy, old enough to be her father—well, wasn't he her father's side-kick before she was *born*?—and *crazy* for her. I wised up to it when she was about sixteen-seventeen. He begun looking at her different. It was—well, kinder the way he sizes up a cub that he figures is about old enough to start training. Kinder makes your blood run cold. He had a lotta say-so over her, on account of having learned her the Flash o' Fire act, and she sorter looked up to him, like a kid will. Wasn't afraid of him, though. Wasn't scared of man or beast, not her!

Well, I was fretting, like I said, and I was taking on weight something scandalous and that worried me, too, 'cause I couldn't keep round after April like I wanted without my feet just killing me. And everybody kidding me and asking me was I understudying Millie Swensen, that was our Fat Lady, then, and the Old Man getting off wise cracks like—"Say, Annie, you're not a lady any more—you're a *group*!" And then, one day, when he got sore at Millie's crabbing (don't let 'em string you on that bunk about fat folks being always good-natured!) he got a big idea. He says to me, "Listen, Annie, I'm pretty darn' sick of that old hippo and her disposition and if you can lay on another hundred pounds, why, I'll give you the job," he says. Well, maybe I wasn't tickled pink! I was just as darn' tired of sewing up rips in tights and mending torn gold lace and stitching on spangles as he was of

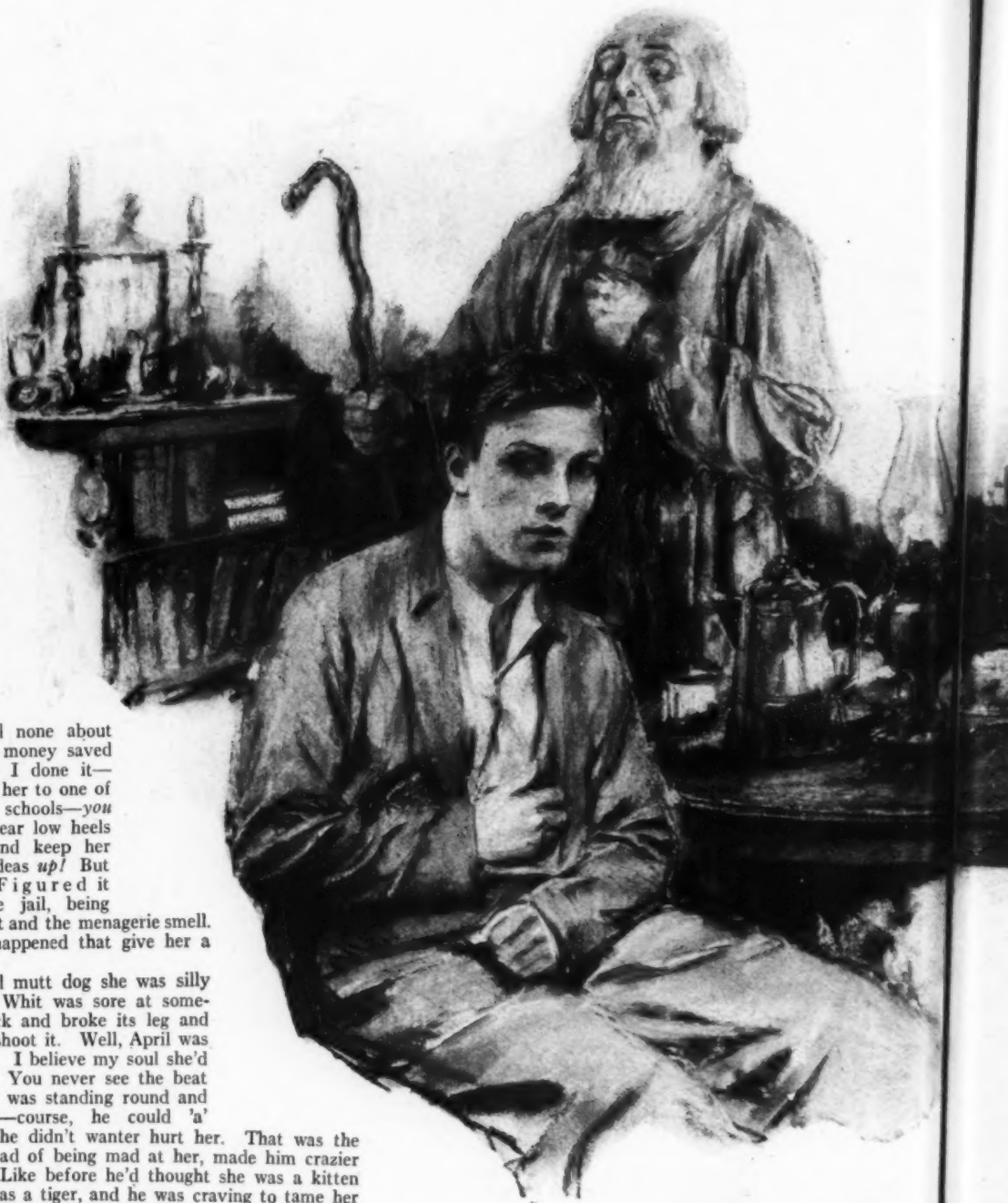
Millie and her meanness. *Lordy!* Just to sit easy and let the hicks with hay in their hair, and milk on their shoes, pinch your leg to see was it real. Well, sir, I started training that day. I was always a sincere eater, and from right then I begun to put my heart into my work. I uster buy all the ladies' magazines, see, and read all the ways to keep your girlish contoors—and then I'd do the opposite, and it worked swell!

Well, that was slick for me, but it didn't ease my mind none about April. I had a little money saved up—God knows how I done it—and I wanted to send her to one of those smooth, silky schools—you know—where she'd wear low heels and no war paint and keep her voice down and her ideas *up!* But she couldn't see it. Figured it would be sorter like jail, being away from the sawdust and the menagerie smell. But then something happened that give her a different slant on it.

She had a little old mutt dog she was silly over, and once when Whit was sore at something he give it a kick and broke its leg and then he was going to shoot it. Well, April was on him like a panther. I believe my soul she'd 'a' tore his eyes out! You never see the beat of it. Lotta the boys was standing round and they pulled her off—course, he could 'a' defended himself but he didn't wanter hurt her. That was the funny part of it. 'Stead of being mad at her, made him crazier about her than ever! Like before he'd thought she was a kitten and now he saw she was a tiger, and he was craving to tame her to eat outer his hand. From then on, she hated him. The vet. fixed up the mutt, and she lugged it round, day *and* night. Uster take it up with her in the Flash o' Fire act.

There was a poor young boob that just actually worshiped the sawdust she walked on, a juggler he was, and a nice lad, though his act wasn't anything to write home about, and he was always trailing her round, and in a way it was a comfort to me, getting daily more stationary like I was. Many's the time he saved her from Whit and that didn't endear him to Whit none, either. And April getting kinder hard and desperate and don't-care—Say, I was worried sick, and that was a swell thing for my career. When my mind's easy, why, everything I eat just naturally turns to upholstery, and worry peels the pounds off like a Turkish bath!

She'd flirt with this boy Benny I just told you about, to make Whit sore, and that was hard on the lad, but say, she'd flirt with a giraffe, that young un. And you never knew how she was going to be, one minute to the next—kitten or tiger! Sometimes, I'd get to stewing over it so, I'd just get reckless enough to think it'd be a good thing if—well, if the parachute didn't work, some



night. I figured she was heading for trouble in high, and I believe my soul it's easier on a girl to break her neck than to break her heart!

Finally, things come to a boil and boiled over. Whit beat up Benny for chaperoning April too close and got the Old Man to believe it was the boy's fault, and he give him the gate. I'll never forget April's face that night. I was dressing her for her act.

"You're right, An Tammie," she says, white and quiet. "It's me or him; the both of us can't stay on the same show."

"Well, there's a fat chance of him getting out," I says. Whit owned his own animals and a third interest in the whole circus. "It's you, lambie, and now you'll go to school like Aunt Annie's always wanted you should. We'll talk about it when you come down."

"I wish to God I'd never come down," she says, her eyes black and her mouth shutting like a trap, and little did I dream! Well,

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The lad says: "My grandfather!" and signs her to keep still, and in come the big chief Son of Repentance and says: "Paul, I heard voices."

she took the little old mutt under her arm and off she went, and I sat there figuring how I'd get the Old Man to give me a lay-off and let on I was taking April to the dentist or something, and get her all settled down in a school like I'd dreamed about ever since poor Hazel died and give her to me.

And then, all of a sudden, there was yelling and screaming and women fainting and everybody running around like fools, and the Old Man cursing and crying like his heart would break, and Whit Hendy like death on a pale horse, and the balloon had broke loose!

And the parachute hadn't been fastened on right, and it come down, licketty brindle, without opening, and there was a terrible wind blowing, and there that balloon went sailing away, with April Day, the Flash o' Fire, and her little mutt dog!

Of course, it was easy to figure how it all happened. There was an Eye-talian feller that was wild about her and she naturally couldn't see him with a spyglass, him just a razorback, and

he'd been poisonous for some time, and acting like Grand Opera, and this was his idea of revenge. Whit Hendy would 'a' killed him, or any of the other boys, as far as that goes, or the Old Man himself, but of course the wop lit out the minute he'd done his dirty work.

Well, there's no use getting myself all broke up, living it over again. Even now, after all the time I've had my job, I can still lose about a pound a minute if I get to worrying!

(The Fat Lady produced a pink handkerchief with purple roses in the corner and wiped her eyes.)

While I was going from one faint into another and Whit and the Old Man was keeping the telephone and telegraph smoking, and starting machines in all directions, why, over the hills and far away like the song says, there was a boy sitting by himself and little dreaming what was hurrying up the clock to happen to him!

It seems this boy, Paul Silent, was (Continued on page 100)

The D Box

Illustrated by

W. B. King

By Richard
Connell

NO other young man of our immediate day has wrought more worthily in short fiction than Mr. Connell. Critical attention was first drawn to him by the engaging post-war tales of the French peasantry that a few years ago began to appear after his name. Latterly he has concerned himself with very brief and poignant tales in the French manner, of which the present story is an example.

On his way to the coat-room Francis Dawson always stopped in front of the bulletin-board to read the notices there. He read carefully the names of men proposed for membership, the names of men posted for not paying their bills, and the names of men—these on small, black-bordered cards—who had recently died.


Malcolm Wentworth Munro
Class of 1906
Died April 3, 1925.

Dawson would shake his head, sadly.
"Poor Munro!" he would say.

He had not known Munro. He had never been aware of Munro's existence. One cannot know all the members of the Standish Club. It is a big club and anyone may join it who lives in New York and who has attended Standish University for a year. Dawson had gone to Standish for a year to study mathematics. He had gone there from a little Vermont town, a cold, quiet town, where aloofness and reserve were deemed the first of all virtues. In college he had buried himself in his work and had made few acquaintances, and these, as it happened, did not live in New York. So he knew no one in the club. The Standish Club takes pride in the fact that it is not a back-slapping institution. It is a Standish tradition that members shall respect

each other's privacy, unless formally introduced, so in the three years he had been a member Dawson had intruded on no one's privacy, and no one had intruded on his, except for an occasional request to pass the salt, please, when he was dining, alone, at one of the long tables in the great paneled dining-hall.

Before he went in to his dinner, Francis Dawson stopped for his mail. This was the high point of his day. There are some members of the Standish Club who have private mail boxes with their names stenciled on them, but many others, whose correspondence is not so large, have their mail placed in common boxes



Dawson sought desperately for something to say.
But what could he say?

EVERY evening when his work was done, Francis Dawson entered the wide, hotel-like lobby of the Standish Club. He nodded to Dan, the doorman, who nodded back and said, "Good evening, Mr. Dawson," and then put a small peg in the big board opposite the name "*Dawson, Francis*" to indicate that the owner of that name was in the club. Dan remembered Francis Dawson's name because it was Dan's job to remember the names of the three thousand members of the club and the faces that went with them. Dan did not know that his recognition of Francis Dawson always gave Dawson a glow of pleasure.

under their initial. It was always a somewhat breathless moment for Francis Dawson when he swung open the glass door of the "D" box.

Some evenings he found a letter there; rather more often he did not. He played a game with himself as he walked to the club from his office downtown, a small office in a sunless building where from nine to five he applied himself assiduously to his work as an accountant. He bet with himself whether he'd get a letter. If he won, and did get a letter, he treated himself to the dollar-and-a-half *table-d'hôte* dinner, instead of the dollar dinner, his customary fare.

He did get letters, sometimes. There would be a long envelope containing an urgent invitation to buy some 4¾% Sinking Fund Bonds of Biggerton County, Maine. He always took such letters to a quiet corner of the club smoking-room and read them with furrowed brow as if he contemplated buying up the whole issue, then shook his head, sighed, and threw the letters into a wastebasket. There were letters offering him, at an absurdly low cost per month, handsome bound sets of the works of Dickens. "Secret Memoirs of the Russian Courts" (in nine volumes, half calf), a "History of the World" (profusely illustrated), or the works of Balzac who was described as a great FRENCH

novelist, with the "FRENCH" in red capitals so that he might glean the idea that M. Balzac was very French indeed. There were artfully worded letters from life-insurance agents asking him if in the event of his sudden demise, that very day, his wife and little ones would not be left in DIRE STRAITS. Dawson had no wife and no little ones, no near relatives at all, in fact, but such letters always disturbed him a little. Now and then a letter came with the address in handwriting and "Personal" written across the corner. Experience never seemed to teach him that such letters were usually from some crafty merchant who wished to sell him shoes or hats or automobile tires. Such letters he tore open eagerly, for he was so anxious to get a letter he was not hard to fool. Sometimes he got letters from steamship companies containing gay-colored folders suggesting that he yield to the lure of the Orient and spend a care-free six months in Java, Burma, Egypt. These letters he saved.

He always rifled through the letters in the "D" box twice to be sure he had not missed any.

Dawson had been a member of the club about two years when he discovered Doan. It became his custom to think about Doan at dinner.

There would be a holdup. "Sick 'em up! A false move, and I'll drill you."

Sometimes Dawson was still thinking of Doan when Dawson fell asleep in the furnished room he had in West Twenty-second Street. Dawson admitted to himself that he envied Doan, the fortunate, the gifted, the entirely enviable Henry Cunningham Doan.

Doan was Dawson's creation. That a real Henry Cunningham Doan existed in the flesh there could be no doubt. He, too, received letters in the "D" box, where Dawson fingered them daily, and as these letters were from time to time removed, there must be an actual Henry Cunningham Doan. But Francis Dawson did not know him, had never seen him. For Francis Dawson, Doan existed solely as a name on an envelope—and a symbol. Doan was everything that Francis Dawson wished to be.

To begin with, Doan was rich. Francis Dawson was sure of that. Doan wasn't uncomfortably rich, of course, but he had a decent income, which Dawson had fixed at twenty thousand a year. Of course Doan added to this largely by his practice as a lawyer, for he was a lawyer, and a good one. He often received letters bearing on the corner of the envelope the names of well-known law firms. Once a month, Dawson knew, Doan received a letter from a bank. This was the check for the interest on his investments; that was obvious.

Then, too, Doan was handsome, a big fellow with dark hair



and keen, humorous eyes and an easy smile. Dawson was short, thickly built; his hair was sandy, his eyes behind their spectacles not noticeably keen nor humorous and his smile more embarrassed than easy.

Doan was engaged to be married. She was a charming and intelligent girl, slender and with auburn hair. It was unquestionably she who sent Doan those notes in cream-colored envelopes, postmarked "Poughkeepsie, N. Y." Dawson looked up Poughkeepsie in a gazetteer: "—and is the seat of Vassar College," he read. Why, of course. That was it. She was still in Vassar. They would be married as soon as she graduated. Dawson let his fingers rest on those notes when he encountered them in the "D" box. How had she begun them, he wondered. What terms of endearment had she used? He tried to imagine. But his data on such matters were extremely limited. They were confined to the synthetic love letters he sometimes found in the romantic novels he read when his head was too full of figures to hold any more.

Doan had a busy social life. He had many friends. They called him "Harry," like as not. Dawson thought often of Doan's friends. He thought of the parties Doan went to, the dinners, the balls, the amusing, restful week-ends. He thought of the parties Doan gave in his pleasant rooms which must be on the upper East Side, respectably near Park Avenue. Here one met all sorts of interesting people—a young explorer just back from the fastnesses of Tibet; that scientist and his wife who were engaged in some fascinating research; a poet who read his own poems, and read them well; a broker who could discuss modern music as intelligently as he could municipal bonds; lawyers full of stories of curious cases; and there would be ladies there too—debutantes, witty women of the world, actresses even. Sometimes Francis Dawson ventured to think of himself as going to those parties. "A quiet chap, but with a lot of good stuff in him. So sympathetic and likable." This, he hoped, would be the verdict in his case of Henry Cunningham Doan and his friends. But Dawson indulged this fancy only in his most optimistic moods. After all, what had he in common with Doan—but a letter box?

FRANCIS DAWSON helped to make pass many a long evening down in his furnished room by fantasizing ways and means of meeting Henry Cunningham Doan and winning his friendship.

There would be a holdup. Doan would be sauntering back to his rooms after the opera some night when, at the corner of Park Avenue and Fifty-third Street, Doan would be confronted by a crook who would thrust a revolver against Doan's shirt-front and rasp: "Stick 'em up! Make a false move, and I'll drill you." Then a cool, quiet voice would say, "Not so fast, Mr. Yegg," and the crook would feel something cold and round pressing against the back of his neck. The voice, of course, would be the voice of Francis Dawson and the cold, round object would be the mouth of the medicine bottle in which Dawson carried his anti-insomnia pills. Such clear-headed courage could not fail to impress Henry Cunningham Doan. They would leave the discomfited crook in the hands of the police and would go to Doan's rooms for a cigarette and a chat.

"Oh, yes, of course," Henry Cunningham Doan would say. "I know your name. I've seen it often in the mail box at the club. Often wondered who you were. Look here, Dawson, could you have lunch with me tomorrow?"

Another and less dramatic version of their meeting, as conceived by Francis Dawson, was that Doan found himself facing an extremely intricate problem in accounting in

the course of his legal work. Its solution was vital to Doan's success and happiness. He was in despair. So Doan took his problem to the firm for which Francis Dawson worked. "There's only one man who can do this job," they said to him. "Our Mr. Dawson." After that—But how get that far? Francis Dawson thought of ways, many ways, but they all depended on circumstance, on coincidence, and he had never learned how to bend circumstance and coincidence to his will.

THEN, one day, Francis Dawson saw Doan.

Dawson had finished going through the mail in the "D" box and had carefully replaced it, as there was none for him that evening, when he became aware that another man was waiting for his turn to examine the mail. There had been a letter for Henry Cunningham Doan, one of those cream-colored notes addressed in a feminine hand. As Dawson turned away he saw the man take from the box a cream-colored envelope. The man pocketed it, turned, and was gone. But Francis Dawson had had a glimpse of him. Doan was exactly as he had pictured him—tall, dark, handsome but not too handsome. Francis Dawson was so excited that he ordered the more expensive dinner, although, since he had received no letter that evening, he was not entitled to it.

Dawson saw Doan again in the club three days later. Doan was in the writing-room, bent over one of the desks, writing a letter. He looked up at Francis Dawson as Dawson passed. Dawson hurried on to a desk and sat down as if he too were going to write a letter. It occurred to him as he dipped the pen in the ink that there was nobody to write one to. He looked up, but Doan was gone. He saw Doan two days later. Doan was dining at one of the long tables. Francis Dawson slipped into the next seat. Doan was reading a letter. Dawson studied intently the financial page of an evening newspaper, wrinkling his brow at the discovery that Unadulterated Petroleum had gone up six points although he had neither money nor any interest in the rise or fall of Unadulterated Petroleum or anything else. Dawson put down the paper and saw that Doan had finished reading his letter and was taking an active interest in a dish of curried mutton. Dawson ordered curried mutton, too. But he did not speak to Doan. What would a man like Doan think of him if he did? That sort of thing simply wasn't done in the Standish Club. They silently finished their dinners. Dawson walked back to his room in West Twenty-second Street. Another time—

It seemed to Dawson, as he thought it over, that he had seen Doan frequently in the club before he knew who he was. He became convinced of this a few evenings later when he saw Doan sitting in the club library, a thick book on his knee, deep in reading.

"He's working on some difficult case," Dawson decided. Once, looking up from his own book, he saw Doan staring at him.

"Perhaps he wants to borrow a match," thought Dawson, and was on the point of offering Doan one, when Doan dropped his eyes to his book again.

THEY met one evening at the mail box.

Doan was going through the mail and several of the letters dropped from his hand to the floor. Dawson, who was standing near by, waiting for his turn, stooped, picked them up, handed them to Doan. Doan bowed his thanks; his attention was focused on the letters in his hand. Dawson sought desperately for something to say. But what could he say? It was futile to remark that the weather was fine, for it was singularly nasty, a damp, raw night. So Dawson said nothing.

He walked home in the rain and awoke next morning feeling queer. His head buzzed and he felt hot. At the office he could not get down to work. The columns of figures ran together in a blur. At three o'clock they sent him to St. Margaret's Free Hospital. There they put him in a bed in a ward and told him he had an attack of influenza. He lay there, his head buzzing with the fever.

He was thinking, "Just about this time I'd be going into the club and looking at the mail. Wonder if I drew anything tonight?" when they brought in another patient and put him in the bed next to Dawson's. The man's head was bandaged, and Dawson heard one of the nurses saying something about a taxi-accident. The man had not been seriously hurt for he very shortly went to sleep. Dawson could see his face. It was Doan.

They came to take the temperatures an hour later. They took Dawson's and then they woke up Doan and took his. The two men lay staring at each other. Dawson wanted to say something but he didn't know what to say. No, it was better to let Henry Cunningham Doan begin the conversation. Then it would not look as if he, Dawson, was trying to scrape an acquaintance. That would be contrary to all his training, and to the Standish tradition. He thought he saw a look of recognition in the eyes of Doan.

"I'll speak to him in the morning, no matter what he may think," resolved Francis Dawson. "I'll be feeling better then."

HENRY CUNNINGHAM DOAN, with only the last vestige of a bandage on his head, came into the Standish Club three days later. He stopped at the bulletin board, read the names of men proposed for membership, the names of men posted for not paying their bills and then the little black-bordered cards. There was a new one there:

Francis Dawson
Class of 1916
Died May 9, 1925.

He read the name again and a slightly puzzled expression came to his face. There was something vaguely familiar about it. Where had he seen it? He gave it up.

"Must have been about my age," he thought.

Then Henry Cunningham Doan went to the row of mail boxes. Expectantly he swung open the glass door of the "D" box. Hastily he rifled through the letters. There were letters for Davenport, Drake, Daniels, Drew, Doyle, Dickerman, Dawson, Dyck. He skimmed through them absently till he came to his own name. There were three letters that evening for Henry Cunningham Doan.

He took his letters into the great dining-hall and sat alone at the head of one of the long tables. He ordered the dollar dinner and then opened his mail. There was a letter from a firm of lawyers saying that unless he paid immediately the installment of twelve dollars due on the encyclopedia he was buying, something drastic would be done; there was a letter from his bank pointing out the fact that his account was overdrawn seven dollars; there was a cream-colored note from his aunt in Poughkeepsie, complaining about her rheumatism, as usual.

Doan ate his dinner in silence, his eyes straying idly over the sporting page of an evening paper; he read twice the report of a baseball game, although he had no interest in baseball. Then he walked back to his home—a furnished room in a decrepit building in East Fifty-seventh Street, far east, almost at the East River. He closed the door on the smell of cooking that followed him up the stairs, lit the gas, took out a worn pack of cards, spread them out on the old brass bed and began to play solitaire.



People know good Tomato Soup when they taste it !

Whenever any one mentions tomato soup, what name comes instinctively into your mind? You think of Campbell's because practically all the tomato soup you have ever eaten has been Campbell's and because it has a delicious flavor that makes you remember it always.

Campbell's has taught people what good tomato soup is. It is a standard of quality known and recognized everywhere. It would be difficult to imagine how any food product could enjoy a greater reputation.

Puree of the finest tomatoes that grow. Country butter, fresh and golden. Deft seasoning by skillful French chefs. Taste it tonight. You'll understand its fame!

And it makes a wonderful Cream of Tomato. Read how on the label.

21 kinds

12 cents a can



I'm called the "flash," my speed and dash
Electrify the Bowl.
I'm made of fire, I never tire
For Campbell's is my goal!



THE FAMOUS PARSON CASE

(Continued from page 85)

apartment that cost a prince's ransom every year in rent—he was not truly "class" in the popular sense. He was the son of a Long Island dairy farmer. He had come to New York as a boy, to work in a lunch-room. It was an older brother, Ned Parson, who got the idea of opening a restaurant in Nassau Street, and the two brothers went into it together. That was the first of their string of "Homestead" Dairy Restaurants, on which the Parson fortune was based. After the brother's death, George Parson made a merger of the Homestead restaurants with a rival firm that operated lunch-rooms under the so-called Food Trust, and he was now merely vice-president of this consolidation—of which Horace Chilton was the executive manager. Parson occupied himself with real estate. His father's farm on Long Island, cut up into building lots, had been as profitable as an oil field. He had bought and built in all directions, and in no direction had he gone astray. All his development schemes had succeeded marvelously. He was now a very rich man, convinced of his ability and his importance, living in a continual happy downpour of unearned rents and dividends, and really as simple-minded still as when he first arrived in Manhattan to work as a waiter in Dennett's.

And Martha Browning's reports made it evident that Mrs. Parson was only a feminine version of her husband. She had been a Miranda Baker, daughter of the Rev. Enoch Baker of Flushing, when Parson married her, a choir soprano with fair hair and a nasal voice. For the first ten years of their married life they had lived in boarding houses, both working in the original Homestead Dairy Restaurant. Then when Parson was nearly forty and she was thirty-five, they added their only child Isabel to the family and went to live in a flat. "I don't think the mother wanted a child," Martha Browning wrote. "She speaks always of having done her duty by the girl, but she seems to have done it without affection. She acts that Isabel was always wild. She says as if she were in some way obscurely gratified because her daughter has fulfilled her constant predictions that the girl would come to a bad end."

THE conflict between mother and daughter had been a quarrel between two opposing ideals of conduct. To Mrs. Parson, life was made up of duties mostly—her duty to God, to her husband, to her daughter, to her neighbors, and to her position in the world. She sat down to the good things of life convinced that her appetite for them was sinful, and determined to restrain herself and her family from self-indulgence in them, and solemnly prepared to make her self-denial a good example to her neighbors. The girl sat down beside her with an eager young appetite and a long reach. As an infant, the mother could control her, but at six years old she ran away with some rowdy children from across the street; at eight, she tried to elope with the elevator boy of the apartment house in which they lived; at twelve, she was sent to the discipline of a strict boarding school for girls because her parents could do nothing with her; at sixteen, she was in sturdy revolt, openly independent, contemptuous of her parents as "a couple of back numbers," and doing pretty much as she pleased.

She had been clever enough to wheedle her father secretly over to her side of the war with her mother, but she had never tried to force him to stand frankly with her; she must have understood the intimidated sternness of his frown. And she had been masterly in her handling of Horace Chilton. She had convinced him that his only hope of winning her lay in giving way to her in everything. She used him to de-

ceive her parents, making him take her to all the forbidden places that she wished to go, and forcing him to lie about them loyally. She had a lot of wild young friends, for whom she deserted him at dances, leaving him to wait for her in a corner like a faithful watchdog, and rewarding him, when she returned, with humorous endearments. She called him "Chilly." She had persuaded him that he was her ideal of a husband—that he need only be patient till she was ready to marry him and settle down.

"Well," Duff said, "what we get out of all this is simply an action-pattern that shows the girl was set to run away sometime or other." And he phoned to Martha Browning: "Find out whether the elevator boy wore a livery—the boy she tried to elope with when she was eight."

THEY learned little of any value from Horace Chilton. Parson had told Chilton, in confidence, of the letter from the girl, and Chilton had undertaken to find some trace of her among the wild young friends with whom she used to drink and dance. He put the detectives on every boy who had ever jizzed with her. They discovered nothing. "No," Duff said, "if she'd wanted to elope with any of these cake-eaters, she could've gone openly. She must've picked up some rowdy boy, like the children she ran away to play with when she was six." And when Martha Browning reported that the girl's first love had worn a livery, Duff called in two of his operatives and ordered them to cover the Parson chauffeur.

Nothing came of that, either. The chauffeur was a young Irishman named Larry Farrell who lived respectfully with his mother and a younger brother in a flat on Third Avenue not far from the Parson apartment. He had been a newsboy and a garage mechanic before he took service with the Parsons. Out of his earnings he had set up his brother in a tire-repair shop, and they were planning to open a garage of their own as soon as they had saved capital enough.

When Farrell was not on duty for the Parsons, he was home asleep. It would have been difficult to "rope" him in any circumstances, but now he and his brother and his mother, too, had been so pestered by reporters and police and plain-clothes men that it was impossible for any stranger to approach them unsuspected. One of Duff's detectives tried to get work with the brother in the tire shop, and the brother said: "Chase yerself out o' here, bo. We're not hirin' any private dicks." An operative who attempted to shadow Larry, the chauffeur, reported: "This guy's been tailed so much that he walks backward when he goes to bed."

Another operative tried to make his way into the Farrell flat as an inspector of gas meters, so as to see how the family lived, and the mother stopped him at the threshold. "That meter's been inspected three times this month," she said as she closed the door in his face. And Martha Browning reported, from the servants' gossip: "The chauffeur has been so cross-examined and interviewed and third-degreed that he is planning to go out West, as soon as the excitement blows over, and open a garage with his brother—probably in Los Angeles."

SHE had little else to report from the servants. There were only two of them—an old housekeeper who had come to the Parsons, years before, as a nursemaid for the daughter, and a personal maid who waited on mother and daughter both. The rest of the service was supplied by the apartment house—as in a hotel. The housekeeper

acted as a butler and answered the door; the personal maid served as a sort of second man and kept the place in order. In the details of the daughter's daily life which these two unconsciously supplied to Martha Browning, there was one curious incident which had no recognizable significance. On the morning that the girl disappeared, she had slept late. At ten o'clock, a woman called with a gown that had been ordered from a Madame Stojowska. This woman—an elderly gray-haired woman, rather shabbily dressed—had insisted on seeing "Miss Parson," to try on the gown. The mother was out. After some carrying of messages between the sleepy girl and the implacable dressmaker, Madame Stojowska's representative was admitted to the bedroom, and Isabel Parson said sulkily: "Well, what the devil do you want?" The woman closed the bedroom door before she answered. And nothing more was heard of her. She left the apartment without being seen by the servants; and, after she had gone, when the maid brought in the girl's breakfast tray, the box containing Madame Stojowska's gown lay, still unopened, on the foot of the bed.

The servants supposed that Isabel had quarreled with the dressmaker and sent her off without allowing her to try on the gown. But the gown was an evening frock which the girl had bought to wear on her weekend visit. She had taken it with her in her suitcase. If there had been any doubt of its fitting her, it seemed strange that she should not have tried it on.

"Better see this dressmaker," Duff directed Martha Browning, "and find out what happened. She appears to've been one of the last persons, outside of the family, to talk with the girl before she beat it."

AT once, a difficulty developed. To Martha Browning, as Mrs. Parson's private secretary, Madame Stojowska explained that there had been no question of the gown's fitting. Isabel Parson had tried it on, in the shop, two days before its delivery, and all the necessary alterations had been made. Moreover, Madame declared, the dress had been delivered to the Parson apartment by a young girl and not by an elderly gray-haired woman.

Martha Browning said: "Let me see the girl."

The girl was produced. And she admitted, immediately, that she had not delivered the dress. On her way downstairs from the workrooms on an upper floor of Madame Stojowska's establishment, she had been overtaken by a Mrs. Moore who said that Madame had ordered her to deliver the dress to Miss Parson and see that it fitted.

"But I told her nottings of such a kind," Madame put in.

Mrs. Moore was a sewing woman, intermittently hired when business was brisk. She had taken the dress for Miss Parson from the girl, and the girl had gone on with some other packages which she had to deliver.

"But no!" Madame protested. "I did not told her."

"Let me see this Mrs. Moore," Martha Browning said.

And Mrs. Moore was not forthcoming. She had not worked for Madame Stojowska "since some weeks"—not, in fact, since the Saturday on which she undertook to deliver the gown.

Martha Browning wrote down her address. "Please say nothing of this to anyone," she warned Madame Stojowska, aside, "or you may be involved in publicity that will hurt your business."

"I say not at all," Madame promised fervently. "I do not like the trial of murders. No, not with my shop."



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MARTHA BROWNING went at once to the nearest telephone, not daring to make another move till she had consulted Duff. And Duff said: "Good! I don't know where we're going, but I think we're on our way at last. Don't do anything about this. Leave it to me. I'll look up Mrs. Moore as soon as I've thought the thing over. Go back to your invalid and don't say a word."

She returned to her rôle of trained nurse, and Duff settled down to "think the thing over" in a manner that was peculiar. He sent an operative to "cover" Mrs. Moore at her address. He called for the complete file on the Parson case. He gave orders that no one was to disturb him in his office till he said the word. Then he planted himself at his shabby old desk, in his creaking swivel chair, and began to read his operatives' daily reports in a dreamy idle-minded mood, with one eyebrow raised and his lips pouted. It was an absurdly childish expression on the face of such a man. It was almost the expression of a blinking baby with a bottle to suck and its eyes on a day-dream.

In the midst of Martha Browning's reports on the domestic relations of the Parsons and their daughter, he smiled lazily and reached for his phone. "Get me Parson," he ordered, in a sleepy voice, and went on reading with the receiver to his ear.

"Mr. Ewing," he said to Parson, in the same tone of abstraction, reading as he spoke, "I'm phoning from the office where you consulted me, last week, about this legal tangle of yours. . . . Yes. Could you drop in to see me, this afternoon? . . . Yes, as soon as you can. Right away, if that's possible. . . . Yes. I've something important to report. Yes. . . . Yes." He let his voice trail off languidly as he hung up. "Quite so," he added, after the receiver was on its hook. He put aside the reports and lay back in his chair. "Well," he said, "I must've been deaf and blind." He shook his head sadly. "I must be losing my mind."

He was still sweetly downcast and self-depreciative when Parson arrived. "I'm afraid I've been pretty dumb about this case," he said as they shook hands. "Pretty damn dumb!" And Parson, dressed in black and as formally solemn as an undertaker, received the confession with an air of meek self-conscious satisfaction. He took it, evidently, as a proof that Isabel Parson's father was not such an obvious "darn fool" even if he didn't know where his daughter was hidden.

"The fact that you didn't tell me who you were, at first," Duff continued, "and failed to tell me about the letter you'd received, and all the rest of it—I should have known that the impulse to concealment—" He left the sentence unfinished with a vague gesture that motioned Parson to a chair. "I suppose I took it for granted that if a man called in a doctor, he wouldn't lie about his symptoms, or deceive his lawyer about the facts in a case that had to be defended." He sat down. "Well, well," he said. "Live and learn. Live and learn."

Rita Weiman

Miss Weiman writes short tales, novels and plays, as the spirit moves her. For an early issue she has written a remarkable story of jealousy which you will remember a long, long time. It is called—

"Flapping Wings"

He sat down and left Parson standing. And Parson stood, reddening like a guilty schoolboy, his hat in his hand. "Look here," he said, in a weak bluster. "What're you talking about?"

Duff gave him a dark look. "Whose child is this girl, anyway?"

"Whose child?"

"Yes. She's not your wife's. And I don't believe she's yours. Whose is she?"

IT was possible to watch, in Parson's features, a certain hardening that indicated a sulky determination not to answer Duff. He was no longer merely guilty; he was guilty and on his defense.

Duff shot at him quickly: "Who is Mrs. Moore?"

And the question acted like a shell exploding inside his defenses. His face seemed to break up, at once, in a painful dissolution of his stubbornness. He stared at Duff, pale and shocked, but apparently no longer clearly aware either of Duff or of himself. It was as if the name of Mrs. Moore had raised her, like an apparition, between him and Duff, with the whole story open before both of them; and it was as if acknowledging her, necessarily, in her presence, that he replied, in a breathy huskiness: "She's her mother."

"Who was her father?"

"My brother Ned."

He sat down. That is to say, his body sat down, as though the impact of Duff's questions had overcome and weakened him, but he was evidently unconscious of his own movement, and he gazed at the floor, with a look of empty-eyed tragedy.

"I'll have to know the whole story," Duff said. "You'd better tell it to me."

PARSON remained a long time silent, but it was an unconscious silence, not a stubborn one. His habitual frown and all his timid aggressiveness had vanished from his face. He looked as if he were going to cry.

"My brother Ned was a fine fellow," he said, pathetically, "but he wasn't happy with his wife."

He paused on this for so long that Duff, at last, said: "No?"

He shook his head. "No. That's why he fell in love with her—with Katie Moore. She was a waitress in one of our restaurants."

After another interminable silence, Duff prodded him again: "I see."

"I didn't know anything about it," he went on, "till some doctor told him that he had heart disease—that he was likely to drop dead any minute. Then he told me that Katie was going to have a baby, and he asked me to look after her if anything happened to him. And then he dropped dead, one day on the street, before the baby was born, and I got her away to a place over in Jersey City, and I told my wife about it, and we agreed to adopt the baby, because Katie hadn't any way to take care of it—or anything—and my wife went away for the summer, and when she came back she brought the baby with her and pretended it was hers."

"The girl—Isabel—did she ever know?"

"No. Nobody knew—except her—the mother. We didn't even tell Ned's wife. She died without knowing it."

"Has Katie Moore made any attempt to—"

"No, no. Never. Never. She was a good girl—a pious girl. She knew she'd committed a sin and she wanted to suffer for it. That's why she wouldn't take any money from us, or anything like that. She earned her own living, as a waitress, and then sewing. She was—she was afraid her sin'd be visited on the child, so she wouldn't come near, for fear some one might suspect. She wouldn't take any money from us—not even Ned's money after his wife died. She wanted it all to go to the baby. She

wanted her to grow up a good girl and never know she'd had a bad woman for a mother. She wouldn't let us know where she was, or anything. She was afraid something might happen. She was queer. The last time I ran across her I thought she was—I thought she'd been drinking."

HE did not ask how Duff had learned of Katie Moore. He took it for granted, apparently, that his wife had inadvertently betrayed their secret to the nurse. And when Duff said, "Well, you'll have to come along with me and see this woman," he rose, without asking any questions, very much as if he were in the hands of the police.

It was not till they were outside, in a taxicab, that he remonstrated: "Why do we have to bother her?" And when Duff replied, "Because I think she knows where the girl is," he protested, feebly, "How is that possible?"

"You'd better let her tell you, herself," Duff answered.

He fell silent again. He rode, indeed, with Duff, like a mourner in a funeral who had his eyes and his thoughts fixed on the melancholy past that was being carried to the grave, in the hearse, ahead of them. He did not move when the cab stopped at an old brownstone residence in a row on Lexington Avenue that had been converted into rooming-houses. "Here we are," Duff said.

There was a cleaner and dyer in the basement. Up the flight of battered brownstone steps, a hairdresser advertised in the parlor windows. Duff's operative loitering on the sidewalk, came up to report with a brisk casualness: "She's on the third floor back, Chief. There's no one lives with her. She sounds like she was alone in there, sayin' her prayers."

Duff nodded, and the man, walking away quickly, disappeared again. "Come along," Duff said to Parson.

Parson got out as if they had reached the cemetery.

He followed the detective upstairs, blindly, to a door in the rear of the dark hallway on the third floor. Duff knocked without an answer. He knocked again. The third time, a muffled voice called through the door: "Who is it?"

"Tell her," Duff whispered.

And Parson answered: "It's me, Katie. It's George. George Parson."

They heard a bolt withdrawn, and then the door opened on a strange sight.

KATIE MOORE stood back, in a man's overcoat and bare feet, with her gray hair wild and hanging in her eyes. Behind her, the room, all its blinds drawn, was bright with lighted candles, like a chapel, and with altar lights that burned on the mantelpiece before small statues of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph and images of the Sacred Heart. She had the strong face of an old witch, her eyes bloodshot and exalted, her head trembling. She held the overcoat closed at her throat with one hand, and with the other she kept putting back her hair from her face distractedly. "It was the devil in her," she said in a hollow voice. "Even unto the third and fourth generation. It was the devil in her, the same as it was in me."

Duff edged Parson into the room and closed the door behind them. "Where is she?" Duff asked.

And she replied to Parson, as if she did not see Duff at all: "She's gone her own ways. She laughed at me. There, in her bed, with them nightclothes on her like a bad girl, she laughed at me when I told her. 'It's the devil in you,' I said, 'like it was the devil in me at your age,' I said, 'an' yuh needs must fight against it before it's too late. I seen yuh in his arms,' I said. 'Yuh clung to him an' yuh kissed him, the same as I did, an' I yer mother.'"



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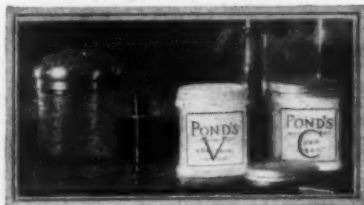
A gay, unconscious toss of her head every now and then recalls that "Princess Alice", who, as the daughter of the President, captured the imagination of America. Her keen grasp of public affairs has drawn about her the most personable of Washington's inner circle. No woman has the same influence in the shaping of political events.

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"Who? Where?" Duff interrupted her. "Who was she kissing?"

She blinked at Parson. She dropped her voice to answer, in a saner tone: "The chauffeur."

"Where?"

"At the head o' them stairs," she whispered, "on the way up to the fittin' rooms, where he'd gone to call her, because he couldn't wait no longer with the car. An' when they seen me watchin' them, they came downstairs past me, gigglin'. An' I knew her the minute I set eyes on her." Her voice was rising again to a crazy cracked chant. "An' I prayed an' prayed, an' God sent me the girl with the dress in a box, an' I took it, an' I went to her, an' I told her she was on the brink o' hell because o' what she was, an' I her mother. An' she jumped up an' says: 'D'yuh tell me, then, I'm not their daughter?' An' I said: 'No. Not you. Yuh're the daughter o' sin,' I said, 'an' me a bad woman.' An' the devil in her laughed, an' she leaped out o' bed with villainy, an' she said: 'Tell me, then, who am I?' An' I told her. An' she flung up her hands an' laughed an' laughed. An' I seen the devil in her face, an' I knew she was lost, an' I run away to pray—fer nothin' can save her now but prayin'. Nothin' but prayin'." She waved her hands to the tapers and the images on the mantelshelf. "Yuh'll pray with me, now," she said; and throwing off the overcoat, she knelt down in a long white garment that looked like a priest's alb; and blessing herself, she began to repeat a muttered litany, very rapidly, bent double and beating her breast.

THE room was stifling with exhausted air and the smell of guttering candles. Parson wiped his forehead with a trembling hand. Duff took him by the elbow. "Come along," he said under his voice. "We'll get nothing more here."

Parson shook his head, without turning around, fascinated by the pathetic huddle of devotion crouched on the floor before them. "We can't leave her like this," he whispered. "She's—she's gone crazy."

"She'll be all right," Duff argued. "My man'll look after her till we get back. You can have her taken care of—in a sanitarium or something. There'll be lots of time for that. But we've got to move fast, now, if we're going to find your daughter. We're only a couple of jumps ahead of the newspaper men, if anyone down at that dress-maker's begins to babble. Come along, quick."

He had opened the door while he talked. He drew Parson out and shut it gently after him. "I was right about that chauffeur in the first place," he muttered, "if I'd only had sense enough to go after him myself."

Parson, behind him, blundered along the dark hallway and stumbled down the stairs, blinded with tears. He was still carrying his hat in his hand when they came to the street door. "Pull yourself together," Duff said harshly. "Put your hat on. Draw it down more over your eyes. All right. Come along. We can get in the cab before anyone sees you."

He hurried Parson to the waiting taxi and gave the driver the Farrell address on Lexington Avenue. He sat back, frowning

busily, without so much as a glance at the silent man beside him. And when Parson said at last, "Poor Ned! I hope he's nowhere that he can see her like that!" Duff turned on him.

"Now, look here," he threatened, "if we're going to get anywhere with this job, we'll have to have some sense about it. You're not to blame this girl for running away, you understand. Your wife's a good woman, but you know as well as I do that she wasn't as crazy about the child as she would've been about one of her own. She's been trying to do her duty, but duty's no good with a child, and this girl's been running away from it ever since she was old enough to walk. You'll have to make up your mind to let her go. The best you can do is to help her get away without a whole lot of newspaper holler that'll raise a yell around her wherever she gets to. Between her crazy mother and the rest of you, you've just about ruined her life. The best you can do is to try to help her to find a little happiness with her chauffeur-boy, if that's possible."

Parson asked dully: "Where is she?"

"There's only one place she *can* be, but if I let you see her, you've got to promise to do nothing but help her. You've helped to make Katie Moore what she is, with your darned nonsense. Now you've got to help me get this girl a chance for her life."

"What've I done?" Parson protested, brokenly.

"You should've let that woman keep her baby," Duff scolded. "You could've covered the whole thing up, so nobody would've been any wiser. Then you wouldn't have a crazy mother on your hands and a daughter that's trying to destroy herself. You'll let this girl have her lover, now. You'll cover that up for her, and you'll cover it up right."

Parson did not try to defend himself. He was obviously "licked." "What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to help her and the boy get away where the newspapers can't find them. I want you to give her her money—every last cent of it—and set the boy up in business somewhere, and let him have a chance to make good. I don't care a damn about your piety or your morality or anything else. You're going to do what I tell you, or I'll drop the whole case, and the newspapers'll find her and make you look like a fool."

"I haven't said I *wouldn't*, have I?"

"All right, then. I'm your lawyer, understand. I'm your lawyer, and I'll do the talking, and you'll agree to everything I say. Your chauffeur lives here with his mother and his brother." The cab was pulling up at the Farrell number. "They'll let you in when they mightn't let me, so you'd better ring the bell, and ask to see the mother, and I'll do the rest."

BUT when Parson rang, at the door of the Farrell flat, it was Mrs. Farrell herself who answered; and to Duff's surprise she was not Irish. She was a small, motherly-looking Englishwoman in gold-rimmed spectacles, dressed in black and a kitchen apron, with a basting spoon in her hand. "Well, sir," she asked, "what is it?" And before Parson could reply, Duff explained: "This is Mr. Parson. I'm his lawyer. We'd like to have a few minutes' talk with you in private."

She hesitated only a second or two while she looked them over, unembarrassed. "My boys're not back from their work yet," she said, "but come in. Larry'll be here any minute." She held the door open for them to enter and she closed and locked it behind them when they were in. "Sit down if you will."

There was no inner hall to the flat, and they had come directly into a living-room that made no pretensions of being a formal parlor. The furniture was old and worn;

there were newspapers scattered about on the rag carpet; a disorder of pipes, tobacco, playing cards and automobile catalogues covered the center table; a sewing machine stood by the window; a kitten was asleep in a sewing basket on the seat of an old rocker. As her only gesture of hospitality, Mrs. Farrell put the basket and the kitten on the sewing machine, silently, and laid down her spoon.

Duff liked her, and he liked the room. If he had put his feeling into words, he would have said: "This is a shrewd and capable woman. She understands that the essential thing in a home is the happiness of the human relationships in it. She lets that govern her housekeeping, and she doesn't worry about appearances. I'll bet she makes those boys comfortable."

He said to her: "We didn't come to see your son. We came to see you. We think you can help us."

She clasped her hands over the waistband of her apron, patiently. "How can I do that?"

"Sit down and I'll tell you." He motioned Parson to a chair beside the table. He drew up a chair for himself, to face her rocker. She sat down before him with the appearance of being only politely and impersonally interested. But behind him, and in front of her, were the portières of a doorway leading into the next room. They were cheap chenille curtains, with a ball fringe, hanging on a curtain pole and closely drawn. She never glanced at them, but he could see that she was as acutely aware of them as he was himself.

"On the day that Mr. Parson's daughter disappeared," he said, "she wrote her father a note to tell him that she was all right, that he wasn't to worry about her. That was a Saturday, as you may remember, and the note was either delayed in the mails, or mislaid in some way, so that he didn't receive it till Monday morning. In the meantime, he'd been so worried that he'd notified the police. And all this uproar started. He let it go on in the hope that so much publicity would make it certain she'd be found; and he wanted her back at any cost, you understand; but now he realizes that she was unhappy at home, that he'll have to let her go if she wants to go; and all he asks is to help her to get away without being caught by the police or exposed by the newspapers or anything like that."

DUFF was speaking overloudly, for the benefit of the portières. Evidently Mrs. Farrell could not decide whether he thought that she was somewhat deaf or whether Parson was. She kept looking from Duff to Parson and back again to Duff. "I see," she said, when Duff paused for some word from her.

"She can't get away by train, or by boat," he continued. "She's sure to be recognized. Her only chance is to go by automobile, and even so it won't be possible for her to stop at any hotels, or to go through any cities where newspaper men might spot her. She'll have to travel in a machine with some sort of camping outfit. As soon as she's ready to start, we'll notify the police and the newspapers that she's been found—that she's been suffering from a loss of memory, or some bunk of the sort, and she's written her father and he's put her in a sanitarium. That'll stop them from looking for her around here, and in a few weeks the excitement'll die down and they'll stop looking for her anywhere. In the meantime, she'll be well on her way across the continent—say to Los Angeles."

"I see," she said. "And how can I—"

"In this way. Your son Larry has been planning to open a garage, with your other boy, as soon as they've saved up enough money. He's even mentioned the possibility of doing it in Los Angeles. You'd want to go with your boys, of course, and there's no

"The Killer"

That's what he's called in the land he roams, by hunters and trappers. He is considered by many authorities the most vicious animal in the world, and his life is no less thrilling than its story—which has been written for an early issue by

Samuel Scoville, Jr.



If you could buy health for Baby

—all the money you now have—all the riches you ever dreamed of getting—would be spent freely and gladly.

Doctors say that to keep Baby in glowing health—from the tips of his pink toes to the top of his curly little head—*clean, sweet clothes are vitally important.*

Millions of mothers find that the splendid soap and dirt-loosening naptha in Fels-Naptha give them just the

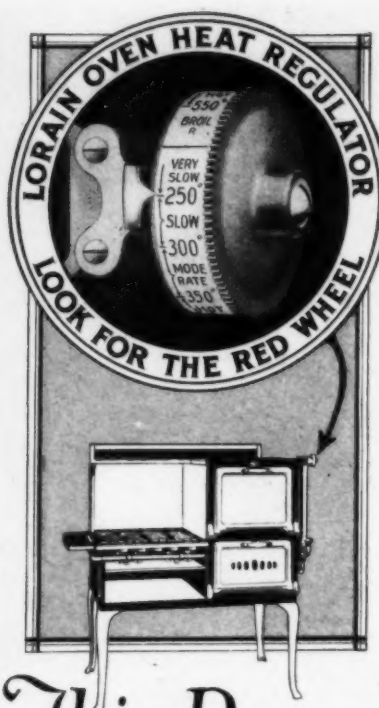
extra washing help needed for keeping Baby's things sweet and safely clean.

Also for doing—more easily and more quickly—the whole family wash, and the general cleaning mothers find necessary every day.

Isn't this extra help—for Baby's sake and for your own—worth the penny more a week you pay for Fels-Naptha? It's cheaper in the end, too—any way you figure it.

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THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR
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This Range Works While You Play!

THE Lorain Oven Heat Regulator stands watch over the stove while you enjoy yourself elsewhere.

Just place the baking in the oven. "Set" the Lorain Red Wheel at the correct temperature. Then leave the kitchen until your alarm clock tells you the food is perfectly baked.

Set the Lorain Red Wheel at a low temperature and you can cook a Whole Meal in the oven at one time while you are away for hours.

Even fruit-canning is easier when done by the Lorain Oven Method.

Ask your dealer for a demonstration and remember that unless the Regulator has a RED WHEEL, it is NOT a LORAIN.

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LORAIN

OVEN HEAT REGULATOR

reason why—if you went with them—they couldn't drive the girl across the continent in the way you suggest. In order to pay them for this, Mr. Parson'll put up all the capital they need to start in business for themselves in Los Angeles. Also he'll supply the machine, with the camping outfit, and pay all the traveling expenses, and give you a salary, if you want it, for as long as the girl needs you. She has money of her own coming to her through an uncle who died some years ago, and that'll be placed at her disposal right away. All Mr. Parson wants is to let her be happy in her own way. She can marry anyone she pleases or do anything she likes. We know she'll not do anything too wild as long as you're looking after her."

Mrs. Farrell studied him a long time, doubtfully. "I'll have to talk to Larry," she said.

"Naturally," Duff agreed. "And of course we needn't warn you not to talk to anyone else." He gave Mrs. Farrell one of the cards that he used when he was posing as a lawyer. "Tell him to phone me first thing in the morning. We'll turn all the necessary money over to him as soon as he says the word. And tell the girl, when you see her, that she's free to marry anyone she wishes, even the boy she kissed on the stairs at the dressmaker's, if she wants to."

She took this without so much as blinking. "I'll tell her," she said, and she went to open the door.

PARSON had been listening vaguely. He rose when he saw Duff saying good-by. He looked around him, blankly disappointed, as if he had expected something dramatic to happen. "Come along," Duff said. "I want you to write some checks for me."

"Yes," he said, "but where is she? Isabel? I want to see her."

"No," Duff urged him on. "Not till she wants to see you."

And, at that, the portières were flung back with a cry of "Dad!" and the girl rushed to throw herself in his arms. They clung together in silence for a moment, and in that silence Duff whispered to Mrs. Farrell: "Tell him I'll wait for him downstairs, in the taxi."

He slipped out quietly. "Oh, Dad!" the girl was laughing and weeping as he closed the door. "I've been so miserable and so happy. I'm sorry I did it, and I'm not sorry. I'm glad—"

A FEW days later, the Parson case, as far as the newspapers were concerned, suddenly blew up. Parson notified the police that his daughter had been found, that she'd suffered "a loss of identity" and wandered away from home, but she'd written her mother as soon as she recovered her memory, and she was now resting in a sanitarium. He refused to name the sanitarium because he wished to protect the girl from any further publicity.

On the very same day that this announcement was made, the Parson chauffeur resigned his job. His brother had sold his tire shop, and the whole family were going to Los Angeles, where the two brothers intended to open a garage. They were sending their trunks ahead of them by express and most of their household furnishings by freight, and they were following in a touring car that was ingeniously fitted up for camping out.

Their neighbors were much excited. They planned to give the Farrells an enthusiastic send-off on the Saturday morning on which they were to start. But when Saturday morning came, it was discovered that the Farrells had slipped away in the middle of the night. "Larry had a bride with 'im," the policeman on the beat explained, with a grin. "He said to tell youse all he didn't want to start with a bunch of ol' shoes tied to his axle."

A FLASH OF FIRE

(Continued from page 89)

the grandson of an old bird that was just as happy as if he'd had his right mind. He was blind, and full of fierce religion and he had herded a bunch of boobos out into this hollow in the hills where there wasn't even a railroad or a telephone nor nothing and formed the Sons and Daughters of Repentance. Sounds peppy, don't it? Well, it was a sob story about his only chee-ild that stepped out with a handsomer man and left her young one and her husband which died of a broken heart, which is interesting if true. Me, I never see it happen, not to no gent! They may break their promises or their necks, but not their hearts, not being built that way. But the old feller fell for it, and he buried the blighted son-in-law and gathered up his goods and chattels, and the grandson, which was two-three years old, and collected his mob and headed for the hills, and there they'd been ever since and now the boy was twenty, and a 'Pollo to look at, I'm telling you! And innocent as new milk! Say! He was never on a train nor a street car and never saw a machine or a movie nor lapped an ice-cream cone nor nothing! You just simply can't imagine it! Your mind can't take it in. He lived alone with his blind grandfather and the woman next door come in to cook and clean, and she and the grandfather had fixed it up between 'em that this boy Paul, and Dorcas, her daughter, which had a squint and made lovely biscuits, should get married soon's he was twenty-one.

WELL, this lad had never seen nor known anything else, but at that he sensed, somehow, that he was missing out on something. He begun to get restless and

moony, and that worried the old man, and he thought he'd hurry up the wedding and maybe that would sort of take up his mind, but he kinder hung back, and so the old prophet, he allows it's a matter for prayer and fasting, and he shuts down on the eats with the Paul lad for a stretch of forty-eight hours or so, and he prays with him and for him, loud and lively, and when he gets out of breath, why, one of the other Sons of Repentance takes over the job, and bimeby they have that poor young one so empty and so pie-eyed for sleep he don't know whether he's afoot or horseback! Finally, being wore out themselves, they leave him alone, but he's not supposed to eat or sleep, oh, no! He's due to wrestle with the world and the flesh and the devil until morning when—with good luck—he'll have the demon that's been rooming in him, licked to a finish.

Well, now, you get this! It's good! Here he is, alone in the house except the old prophet which is pounding his ear, and probly the only human being awake in the colony, and he's dead for sleep and hungry enough to eat a raw dog, and trying to pray and call himself names and asking the Lord—which he figures is an old feller like his grandfather only worse, having more say-so—and almost too weak to stand up, when there comes a knock on the door. Three o'clock in the morning, mind you, and none of the repenting sons and daughters ever out after nine. Well, he's kinda light-headed, and he allows the chariot has come for him, and he makes a rush at the door and tears it open, and there stands April Day with her little mutt dog under her arm!

All Around You People Know This Secret

*Clear eyes, strong bodies, a new zest in living —
all through one simple fresh food*

NOT a "cure-all," not a medicine in any sense—Fleischmann's Yeast is simply a remarkable fresh food.

The millions of tiny active yeast plants in every cake invigorate the whole system. They aid digestion—clear the skin—banish the poisons of constipation. Where cathartics give only temporary relief, yeast strengthens the intestinal muscles and makes them healthy and active. And day by day it releases new stores of energy.

Eat two or three cakes regularly every day before meals: on crackers—in fruit juices or milk—or just plain. *For constipation especially, dissolve one cake in hot*

water (not scalding) before breakfast and at bedtime. Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days. All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Start eating it today!

And let us send you a free copy of our latest booklet on Yeast for Health. Address Health Research Dept. M-22, The Fleischmann Company, 701 Washington Street, New York City.



ABOVE

"ABOUT 15 MONTHS AGO I was afflicted with sties. I had suffered from constipation for several years. One day I noticed dark spots appearing upon my hands. I consulted a physician. 'You have auto-intoxication,' he said, and explained that the waste matter was forcing itself into the blood. He handed me a pamphlet advertising Fleischmann's Yeast. I began taking yeast that day. I took it for four months. I have never had another sty since I ate the first cake; and I am freed of constipation."

MRS. ANNA LENERT,
San Antonio, Texas



"CONSTIPATION WAS my deadliest foe. I always had the tired, sluggish feeling characteristic of this ailment. Impaired appetite, a sallow complexion and a pimply skin also contributed to my misery."

"My mother was employed by a prominent Boston physician who recommended Fleischmann's Yeast. I finally condescended to give it a trial. I continued for two months, when I noticed a slight change. At the end of the fifth month I had regained my lost vigor and my appetite had improved wonderfully. All signs of ache had vanished and the tired feeling was gone—thanks to Fleischmann's Yeast."

LAWRENCE A. PERRY, Medford, Mass.



"I AM THE OWNER of a grocery store and recommend Fleischmann's Yeast especially to my customers who mention having indigestion or nervous trouble. Because it was when I had those troubles myself that I started using Fleischmann's Yeast. I had only a half-hearted hope that it might help me. But in two months I was eating and sleeping normally. Today I have better health than I ever had before. In fact, I believe that I am in perfect physical condition, and that Fleischmann's Yeast has been a great factor in helping me gain that ideal condition."

MRS. ROBERT CARR, Toronto, Ont.



This famous food tones up the entire system—banishes constipation, skin troubles, stomach disorders. Start eating it today!



They stop digestive distress—but not the digestive process!

DIGESTIVE distress is most often the result of excessive acidity of the stomach. And to relieve heartburn, flatulence and gas it is necessary to overcome this excessive acidity.

Alkalines such as bicarbonate of soda will combat acidity—yes. But all too often, they retard digestion. For, unless you take exactly the right amount, they leave the stomach with an alkaline residue.

But your stomach must be slightly acid to digest your food.

Gastrogen Tablets are free from this objection

The minute you swallow one or two Gastrogen Tablets they go to work to neutralize the abnormal acidity. But that done, they stop. You can eat a pound of them—they can't make your stomach alkaline. The surplus passes out of your system without change. It is then a simple matter for nature to restore the slight balance of acidity so necessary for good digestion.

Gastrogen Tablets are mild, safe, effective and convenient. They are pleasant-tasting. And for sweetening the breath they can hardly be excelled.

Your druggist has them in handy pocket tins of 15 tablets for 20c, also in cabinet-size bottles of 60 tablets for 60c. If you wish to try them before you buy them, send the coupon for free introductory packet of 6 tablets.

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Without charge or obligation on my part,
send me your special introductory packet of 6
Gastrogen Tablets.

Name _____

Address _____

They both stare like a coupla ghosts, the girl about all in herself. At last the lad finds his tongue and he swallows and says in a thin squeak: "What are you?" Not "who," get me? He didn't figure she was human at all. "What," he says. And April, God knows why unless she's kinda off her bean, too, what with all she's went through, why, instead of telling him her name she just sort of gasps: "I'm a Flash o' Fire."

Say, wouldn't that do you? There she was in her scarlet tights and the little soft wing effects fluttering in the wind as she stands there in the open door, and this poor starving innocent lamb of a boy that's been praying for a sign of grace, why he just gives a moan and flops down on the floor at her feet like he was dead.

That made it nice for poor April that had crashed down miles from nowhere and saved her life by the balloon's landing in a big branchy tree, and that's tramped for hours getting there, and wouldn't of, only for seeing his light. She begins to cry, and then she wises up and gets his head down and his feet up, like she'd learned when she wasn't bigger'n a bumble bee, and loosens his collar, and fans him, and when he comes to he looks up at her and nearly passes out again, and then he sits up, pretty pale and shaky and reaches out and touches her with one finger, and says: "Why, you're alive!"

And she says, "Yes, but you don't look like you was, yourself," and he says it's because he hasn't had any food or sleep and she says that listens swell for her which is craving both. Well, after they make up their minds that each other is flesh and blood, and kind of explain things a little, he takes her and the mutt dog out in the kitchen and gets a little nourishment for all hands and he eats like a wolf himself but never taking his eyes off her.

WELL, then they hear the tap-tap of the old prophet's cane and the lad says, "My grandfather!" and signs her to keep still and in come the big chief Son of Repentance, and says: "Paul, I heard voices!"

"I was praying aloud," says the boy. Just like that!

"And did you get a sign from Heaven?" the old feller wants to know.

"Yes sir, I did," says the boy, gazing at the girl.

"What was it?" he thunders at him.

"It was—it was a Flash of Fire!" the boy answers up, kinda shaky.

"A Flash of Fire!" the old bird repeats, pleased pink, account of considering that a Class A sign for anybody to get. "The burning bush!" Then he gropes his way over to the boy, just missing the girl, and puts his hands on his head and blesses him and says, very kind and gentle—being crazy about the lad and wrapped up in him, in his way—that he's glad the battle is over and now he must have ample refreshment and then sleep, and with that he tap-taps off again.

Well, after they have et till uncomfortable, he takes her tiptoeing up to the attic, that being the only place the prophet never comes, and fixes up a sort of a bed, and April wants to know how can she get word to me that'll be grieving myself to death, and he says only by mail, there being no telephone nor telegraph, and not even no post office there but he can hike four or five miles and leave it in a R. F. D. box which is collected twice a week when the carrier feels strong and energetic.

And there she hid, her'n the mutt dog, and the boy sneaking up food and drink to 'em and slipping 'em out at night for air and exercise, and all the time the two young ones explaining themselves to each other, and aint that a story for you? I'll say! The boy that had never seen nothing and the girl that had seen too much, in spite of all I could do, not being very light on my feet—him so simple and her so wise, and

the both of 'em so young and sweet-hearted and awful easy to look at! Say, she stood to that boy for everything he'd ever missed out on—color and excitement and action—and then on the other hand, he was something different from anything she'd ever dreamed of in all her born days, with his gray bathrobe-uniform which all the Sons and Daughters of Repentance wore, and his queer, jay, kinda innocent way of talking, and the gentle actions he had toward her, like she was something that would melt if he touched it.

US, meanwhile, doing mad scenes. Most a week before we trailed down the wreck of the balloon. Course, we figured she was alive and that helped some, not finding her body and there being no wild animals nearer than Whit Hendy's cages. Then, outa six ways we could 'a' took, we took five wrong ones and missed the other! I guess it was all of ten days before her letter come, and I never peeped to Whit nor the Old Man, neither. "Annie Meany," I says to myself, "this is your chance to make her get-away, complete and final!" So I starts in, on the q. t., trying to find out how to get to that darn' place, and losing pounds with every breath, and the Old Man crabbing and cursing because now he'd have to keep that lady hippo and her grouches. "Oh, no you wont," I cheers him up. "Just you lemme get my mind easy on April and I'll pile on the padding!"

And Grandfather was fussing some, too, those days. After the sign from Heaven he allowed Paul'd be O. K. and never yip again about his wicked yearnings for the world, and step right up'n marry Dorcas and the squint and the biscuits, but the lad couldn't see it, and the prophet was getting mighty irate again.

And April was getting pretty sick of that attic, what with all the action she was uster having, but Paul was scared stiff to let the Sons and Daughters see her in that outfit she was wearing, especially after his fine and fancy lying to his grandfather!

Well, one day when he'd sneaked up there to set awhile with her, they got to talking about how if only they could get some clothes for her she could come out of hiding, and then they realized that an old trunk of his mother's was there, and they dusted it off and opened it up, and there was some of the cutest little old-fashioned dresses and capes and hats you ever laid eyes on, and April put 'em on over her costume, and if that lad wasn't strung and hung over the side of the boat before, he was then! And they got to talking about their folks and kind of matching up, how his mother was bad and his father was good, and with her just the opposite, and comparing ideas and swapping feelings about how now they felt and acted like one, and now like the other, and it was pretty touching, I'll say. And Paul gets hold of her hand, gentle and easy like he's afraid it might break off, and says: "Don't you think we could help each other to be good?" Say, aint that a valentine for you? Give you a kinda lump around your tonsils? I'll say!

Meanwhile, the Dorcas girl and her old fox mother is doing a little quiet sleuthing. They hear murmurs and see lights and they peek and peer and put two and two together and make five, and finally, after Paul has left the house one day, they get a ladder and the mother steadies it, and Dorcas climbs up and squints into the attic!

Sweet patootie! They tell the old man just enough to make him call a meeting of the Sons and Daughters with Paul there, and when they all gather, why, Mother springs it!

"You," she says, pointing a bony finger at Paul (gee, I hate skinny women; mean and hectoring, nine and a half times outa ten!) "you, confess your shame!"

The boy naturally reddens up but he al-



EXCEPTIONAL RIDING COMFORT

Travel all day, and the next, and the next. Then you will begin to understand what Dodge Brothers, Inc. have accomplished with their long underslung spring equipment, balloon tires and low-swung body lines.

In touring, the master test of riding ease, Dodge Brothers Motor Car now acquits itself with a distinction you have learned to associate only with vehicles of the largest and most expensive type.

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DODGE BROTHERS (CANADA) LIMITED
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Can one tobacco satisfy a man with 45 pipes?

You might imagine that the law of averages would require a man with 45 pipes to smoke a variety of tobaccos.

Evidently, it doesn't work that way, for here is a pipe connoisseur who after vainly trying every tobacco his tobacconist could mention, finally got around to Edgeworth. The result is, his humidor is now "Edgeworthized."

Mr. Sonnenblick makes application for a life membership in the Edgeworth Club. All in favor say "Aye."

But first read his letter:

Larus & Bro. Co.
Richmond, Va.
Gentlemen:

When a man has 45 pipes he certainly is up against it for an all-round tobacco. But first, about my pipes. There are 2 Dunhills, 6 Comoy's, 4 BBB's, 4 Kaywoodies, 2 Petersons, 2 GBD's and the usual meerschaum, calabash, corn-cob, etc. Some were sweet from the start, others remained obdurate and bitter despite the fact that I used every American brand and every English brand I could get or my tobacconist could mention. Fancy prices! Hang the price. I wanted pipe satisfaction. The brands I tried failed; the mixtures I made failed because the tobacco varied.

I saw the ads written by Edgeworth smokers, but they sounded too good to be true. I didn't try Edgeworth in despair, but just to see how less bad it might be. Well, it is praise enough when you know that my office humidor has been Edgeworthized. Now my good pipes taste better and my bad pipes taste good.

If you've got a life membership open, put me down. It's the King Bee of tobaccos and I think I'm a qualified judge. Respectfully yours,
Ira J. Sonnenblick.

Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the pipe test.

If you like the samples, you'll like Edgeworth wherever and whenever you buy it, for it never changes in quality. Write your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 8K South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

We'll be grateful for the name and address of your tobacco dealer, too, if you care to add them.

Edgeworth is sold in various sizes to suit the needs and means of all purchasers. Both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed are packed in small, pocket-size packages, in handsome humidors holding a pound, and also in several handy in-between sizes.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.



lows he hasn't any shame to confess about, and first the old prophet kinda takes his part, having been awful set up about that sign from Heaven.

"No," she hollers, "you got no shame because you are shameless!" And the grandfather thunders, "Woman, what do you mean?"

"I mean just *that*," she says. "What I just said! He is living in sin because he is the child of sin! He has brought a scarlet woman under your roof! Her steps take hold on hell," she says, getting real wild and strong and Biblical. "Son of sin, he is hiding a wanton in this holy house!"

The old man nearly has a stroke or something and he asks Paul it is true and Paul says it's true he is hiding somebody there but she is a innocent young girl and he will kill anybody that tries to harm her, having grown up to sudden manhood, that lad.

"Bring her down!" trumpets the prophet, and Paul brings her down, and while they're coming, the Dorcas girl and the mother tell about the red tights and the little wings and everything, and all the Daughters look shocked to death and all the Sons try to, and then in she comes, dressed in a little old-fashioned full-skirted dress and a bonnet that would melt in your mouth, and a little cape, and awful pale and meek looking for April Day—kinda scared for once in her fresh young life and good thing for her at that.

Well, the Dorcas gang's effect falls kinda flat.

"Tell me! What is she like?" the grandfather wants to know, and some one speaks up and says she looks like a very modest and well-behaved young woman as far as he can see.

That's the cue for the old Black Minorca.

"Yes, as far as you can see!" she snarls. "Watch!" And with that she and her squinting daughter tear the dress and the cape and bonnet off my poor lamb, and there she stands in her red tights and her little fluttery wings of flame, standing there, trapped, among those awful gray bathrobes and gray faces and gray hearts—a Flash o' Fire!

THE prophet roars that everybody is to get out of the room and leave him alone to deal with the girl, and it takes three of the huskiest Sons to drag Paul out, and then they lock the doors on the outside, like the big chief says to.

Well, he makes April come close to him, and he feels her all over with his gnarled old claws, which was the most terrible experience she ever had in all her born days—her face and her throat and her little soft wings that I sewed on her, little dreaming—and her tights. And then he tears loose in that terrible voice of his and calls her everything that the Black Minorca had overlooked.

First, she kinda wilted under it. Course, she'd heard rough talk in her day, 'spite of all I could do to keep her nice and genteel, but nobody'd hardly said a harsh word to her, personal, let alone—Then, say! She just took a good long breath and she tore loose and told that poor old fossil a few facts about himself and his little playmates.

"Pasty-faced cowards, that's what you are," she gives it to him straight. "Running away from a world you're not game enough—no, nor good enough—to live in!" "Peace!" thunders the old feller, but she is going strong.

"It's all right to bury yourself alive if you want to," she tells him, "you being half dead already, but it's a wicked crime to bury a boy like Paul that belongs out in the world with flesh and blood human beings that isn't hidlers and quitters—that's needed in it! And I'm going to take him with me when I go!" she finishes up, bold as brass, but her knees knocking together in

the red tights, part because the grandfather is so wild-eyed and more because it just come to her how she feels about the boy, and how getting away aint going to mean nothing at all if she has to leave him behind!

Well, at that he lets out a most blood-curdling cry.

"Jezebel!" he calls her. "You shall not leave this room alive!" And him packing a staff that you could fell an ox with!

AND while my poor lamb is getting ready for the slaughter, here's me faring forth to the rescue like the story books say, having give the slip, or so I believe, to Whit Hendy and the Old Man. There's a dinky little narrow gauge railroad that goes to the town where her letter was postmarked at, and I had an awful battle to get myself wedged into one of their doll-size seats and a worse one to pry myself loose again, and the fresh brakie says, "Ever try a shoe horn?" he says. Well, after I get to the town I can't get a machine to drive me the rest of the way, seeing they got only one which is the doctor's and he out somewhere in it at that present writing. There's the old ghost of a livery stable on Main Street, and I beat it up there—hotter'n the hinges, it was, and the pounds just oozing off in perspiration—and I woke up the proprietor and he went in and woke up a horse which was kind and willing but couldn't hardly make the grade so he has to go out to his farm and get a plough horse, and he says he wont chance none of his fancy buggies and he hitches up an old deep-sea-going, low-swung phaeton which Queen Victoria might have rode in, and we starts off. And me nearly crazy, because I sensed something terrible was happening.

And that's another thing I believe in—mental telegraphy. Yes sir; I'll say! I was just as sure that my poor lambie was in awful danger as I was that I had prob'ly better give up my career and train for the Human Skeleton!

And to make my mind easier, the hick that's driving me turns round bime-by and he says, "Funny! You aint the only one," he says.

"Aint the only *what*?" I snaps at him.

"That's trying to get to the Sons and Daughters of Repentance," he says. "Feller in the drug store was telling me they was a feller telephoning long distance from the county seat saying could he make it in a machine all the way."

Whit Hendy! I might of known that hyena would get my trail.

"Drive faster!" I says, but he allows the horse is running in high, now. And then, when he points down in a little hollow and says, "Thar they be!" and I'm nearly collapsed with relief, why, the bottom of that prairie schooner drops out from under me, and there we are.

Well, we had some words, hot and heavy, and I told him right from the shoulder what I thought of his outfit, and he says, "I'm a livery stable man, I am; I aint no piano mover!"

He wants to quit on me, the snake, and leave me to walk in, which would of been my death not to mention the end of my ambitions, but I made him take some rails off a fence and make a sort of a kinda bottom in his old bus, and we sets sail again, me looking back over my shoulder for the cloud of dust which will mean Whit Hendy.

AND while that's happening to me, worse is happening to April. You would of thought she could 'a' easy kep' out of the way of a blind man, but when you add to that a crazy man that thinks he is the Lord's special agent to dry-clean the world of sin, why, it's pretty sickening, and she thinks her time has come, and she screams,

Victory seems sweeter, and even defeat loses some of its sting when carefree you ride to and from the game on the smooth-riding comfort of-

Goodrich Silvertown Balloons

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the Long Run"*



Give yourself the mastery of writing and a whole new world opens

Perhaps it is only a red floating balloon . . . or the plock-plock of shoes down a wooden walk. Yet if you imagine that balloon dancing into the open window of a room where sleeps a man who believes in signs . . . or if you make those plodding shoes suddenly stop, then quicken, then leap into the panic of flight—you begin to sense some of the flame of creation every real writer thrills to when he writes.

To set, for instance, a figure on a destined trail and follow, in and out; to bend on oak of character under a storm you control; to put piteous meaning into a filmy handkerchief crushed in the muddy print of a man's heel—these are the immediate joys that can lay a hush, an intensity of suspense on the minds of others. You live for the time in a miniature world that when you write and when your readers read is almost more important than actual existence.

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"Paul!" and the boy, which has acted calm to fool the Sons and Daughters, and give them the slip, comes crashing in the back window, and gets the telephone pole away from the old lunatic, and holds him off while April crawls through the window, and him after her, and just as they land on the ground, me'n' the hick and the plough horse and the Noah's Ark makes our grand entry!

April give one look at me and then has wild hysterics, which I don't hold against her, none, and when she can get her breath she pitches into my arms and says: "An Tannie, An Tannie, An Tannie!" crying and laughing still, and crying again—April Day, sure enough, April showers. And I size up the boy, and we all calm down and begin to figure what we'll do next. The Sons and Daughters wont make any move without authority from the big chick, and they are indoors, now, praying, like he said to, and it's our time to exit, but how? My bus wont carry three, and anyhow, we'd run right into Whit Hendy and his machine, which is due any minute, there being only one road.

"Now, you listen to your Aunt Annie," I says—they looking to me for everything, poor young ones. "We, or anyhow, you, got to make your get-away in Whit Hendy's machine. I'll get his attention, somehow, and the both of you hop in, and fly, and don't bother about me none, which'll be coming along slow and easy in the Robert E. Lee."

"Oh, but the man wont take us and leave him," April objects.

"Where do you get that 'wont take you' stuff?" I says, and reaching down in my stocking and bringing out a roll of bills and giving 'em to her, she being the business manager of that concern and going to continue or I miss my guess. "Separate one of those fellers from his union and slip it to him," I says. And then I give her full directions about where to go and where to wait for me, and just as we get it all doped out, why, enter the villain, like the plays say!

All the Sons and Daughters come spilling out into the street, and the minute Whit asks for April, why, the Dorcas girl and the Black Minorca fastens onto him and tells him their head-lines, and they discover us and me, and then the action starts. I'll say it does!

I and April fixes the driver of Whit's car, which is a good-hearted feller and gets the right idea instant, and turns his car round, and keeps his engine running, and I made April hop in, and it all works out fine, just like I planned except Paul instead of hopping in beside her is busy getting himself beat up by Whit Hendy!

WELL, say, it was like something you'd imagine! You just couldn't figure it was real! Here was me, puffing and gasping and the sweat and the pounds running off me, and here was April Day in her Flash o' Fire suit, and here was the devil of a wild-animal tamer fighting that innocent baal-lamb of a boy which had nothing but size and youngness and twenty years of drinking milk and behaving himself on his side, and here was the Sons and Daughters of Repentance standing round, bug-eyed and just drinking it in and lapping it up—more excitement crammed into those minutes than in all the rest of their gray lives put together!

Paul is awful hampered by that bathrobe—uniform he's wearing and Whit is going to beat him to a pulp. Anybody can see that. Even the Sons and Daughters, and they get to crying and praying, and April jumps out of the car and comes running and screams at them:

"You cowards! You miserable cowards! Don't pray! Fight! He's killing him!"

Somebody has remembered to let the prophet out, and here he comes tap-tapping

along, and it's kinda pitiful at that, with the store he sets by Paul in his crazy way, and now almost insane at what he hears and can't see.

And it was him and me that saved the day. Mostly me, I'm free to admit, but he cert'n'y helped some. He come tap-tapping along, hollering, "Paul! Paul!" and the Sons and Daughters never lifted a finger to hold him back, and he sticking out his staff to feel his way and gets it right between Whit Hendy's legs and trips him and he falls flat.

Quick as a flash, I set on him! Yes sir, I set right down on him like a thousand o' brick and like to killed him! And I shrieks to April, "Get him in the car! Get him in the car! Beat it!" I says, and the driver, he run and helped her lug and tug Paul into the tonneau, him being pretty near done for, and off they go—me settin' there as calm and steady as I set here in this chair.

(She rocked herself to and fro with the mirthful memory of it, and wiped her eyes with her pink and purple handkerchief, but they were now the tears of comedy.)

SAY, but a rush of words to the face like I just had cert'n'y makes you dry. If you was a mind to get me a cool drink o' something— And say, don't leave Whit Hendy drop nothing in it when you go past! What? Oh, well, that's all there was to it. They mended up the Maine and I got back to town and to the train, and found my young ones waiting, just like I told 'em to. And first thing I seen to was getting Paul outa that bathrobe and into some Klever-Kut Kollege clothes and second, I got 'em married! Sudden, but safe—what with Whit coming to, and hitting the trail and the old prophet and all.

And let me tell you it was nine o'clock at night before I set down to my supper, and no food having passed my tonsils since the chill gray dawn. And the waiter was one of those gabby kind that feels like he's the whole reception committee while you're passing through their beautiful little city, and says, "Wonderful weather we're having," and, "But it prob'ly might rain before morning, at that," and what a shame it is I can't lay over and see the two-headed calf which is just born out to Simkins' Corners, and I just held up my hand like a traffic cop and I says:

"Cease!" I says. "Say It With FOOD!" And he got the idea right away and he says, "All right, Sister, what'll it be?"

"CALORIES!" I says. "Bring me thousands and millions and billions of calories!"

And him, the poor low-brow, looks regretful and says, "It's outa season and we dassent shoot 'em."

So I just takes the menu card which is the kind they have in hick towns and reads, "Clear soup or cream tomat; head lettuce or potater salad; lamb stew or chicken fricassee; ice-cream or apple pie," and I just grabs a pencil and crosses out every darn' or on the card and writes in "AND!"

"The Usual Ending"

There's a story title for you. And the story has "the usual ending" too, only its author arrives at it by a most unused road. And its author's name is going to appear frequently after its first appearance in an early issue. It is—

Thyra Samter Winslow



Our Family Tree was a Tobacco Plant

Number 1 of a series of talks on Sweet Caporal Cigarettes

By Irvin S. Cobb

I THINK there must be a whiff of tobacco in my blood. Fact is, I'm sure of it. My great-grandfather, a Vermont Irishman, went South in a wagon after the Revolution and he raised the first tobacco that was raised for export in what is now called The Black Patch of West Kentucky and West Tennessee. Wise old Yank, he cured and

His son, my father, followed in the footsteps of his people. He was a warehouseman. Later he was a buyer for foreign governments and for domestic contractors too. He was accounted one of the best judges of types and grades in the district. He smoked incessantly and he chewed frequently.

His son, meaning me, grew up with the smell of tobacco leaf in his young nose, with the jargon of its business in his ears. We lived on a tobacco street in a tobacco town. There was a stemmery on the corner above us, a snuff factory and a cigar-maker's shop down the road and a whole row of warehouses farther along. In the season, the fat hogsheads blocked the narrow sidewalks. I absorbed the romance of the industry—for it is one of the most romantic of industries—along with my hot biscuits and New Orleans molasses. In four generations, I was the first of the

first-born males of my breed to stray from the ancestral pathway.

And now, in a way of speaking, I'm back again in the family line. I have taken on the job of doing a series of signed advertisements of which this is the introductory one. I have declined propositions to turn out advertisements for various manufactured products because I feel I merely would be a hired hand, exploiting this, that or the other thing for so much a word. But I reached for this opportunity. I knew I could put my heart in it—could with sincerity endorse the article I was praising.

From time to time in this space, I'm going to write about Sweet Caporal Cigarettes. The first cigarette I ever smoked was a Sweet Caporal. That must be all of thirty-five years ago. Even that far back Sweet Caporals had been on the market a good long while. Commercially speaking, the Sweet Caporal Cigarette was born in November 1878—roughly forty-seven years ago. Any product—cigarette or

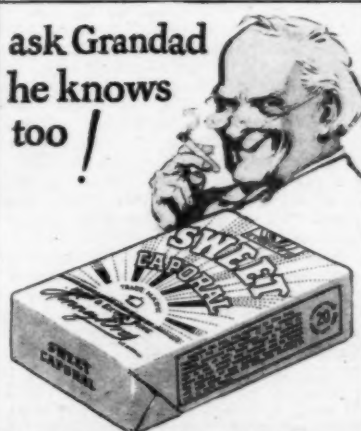


treated the heavy dark weed after crude processes of his own devising, loaded it on keelboats, floated it down the Cumberland to the Ohio, down the Ohio to the Mississippi and down the Mississippi to the Gulf, where he trans-shipped to sailing vessels and sent his cargoes out to the Gold Coast of Africa to be bartered off for ivory and gold dust. I understand that, dealing with black tribesmen, he rarely got the worst of a deal. For if he was an Irishman, he also was a New Englander. He laid the sills for a substantial fortune.

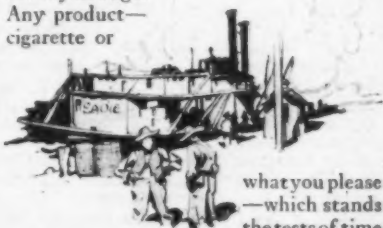
His son, my grandfather, was a planter, a factor, a re-handler of tobacco; and on the side a merchant and a banker and a steam-boatman. His small fleet of stern-wheelers, manned by crews of his slaves and mostly captained by his own kinsmen, carried tobacco of his growing and his neighbors' growing to the city markets of the Southwest.

For his day he was a rich man until the Civil War came along and smashed him up. For he had bought Confederate bonds and had financed a battery of Confederate artillery.

ask Grandad
he knows
too!



The best smokes he ever had were
"Sweet Caps"
Guaranteed by
The American Tobacco Co.



what you please
—which stands
the tests of time
and competition and shifting popular
taste for nearly half a century and holds
its own and steadily grows in favor is
bound to have merits. It just naturally
has to have 'em. It shall be my task to
try to explain a few facts about these
merits.

Thank you.

Irvin S. Cobb

P. S. I write one of these articles every once in a while. Watch for the next.

THE GARDEN OF THE BEY

(Continued from page 67)

The Captain advised him to leave his heavy baggage in the Customhouse until the morning, and soon they were driving through the narrow streets of the native quarter toward the center of the city.

"You'll be at the hotel a few days?" said the Captain.

"About a week."

"Then we may see you."

"Why not come and have dinner with me? Both of you, I mean," suggested Jimmy.

"Well, it's like this. Marie, she's very shy. About meeting strangers, that is. I can never get her to go to the big places. She cooks at home. She has an Arab girl. Now suppose you come, eh? She's shy, but she'll get used to you, if you don't fluster her. And bring your camera. You can take real pictures. I'm only a beginner. Mind, I wouldn't ask everybody to do this. But I've been thinking—"

"I understand," said Jimmy.

BUT when they reached the hotel in the Rue de la Porte de Rosette, Captain Linder put Jimmy's hand to one side, when he offered to say good-by, and frowned.

"Come now," he said. "I'll wait while you get a room." Jimmy left him in the carriage in a pose suggesting profound thought, as though he were forming some new and difficult resolutions.

"I can see what it is," he said when they drove off again. "She's got to see people. I'm glad I thought of it. She's got to come out of her shell. I've been to blame. I've had the idea it was better. If any of the crew saw me with her, you understand? But with you, and other people, there'd be nothing in it. Just a party."

All the way along the great Rue Chérif Pasha and across the Place Mohammed Aly, Captain Linder expanded this idea. Jimmy couldn't help reflecting upon the Captain's assumption that the success of his plans for his own and the girl's happiness was of prime importance to everybody. The man's intense absorption in the affair made Jimmy wonder if she understood it. All the pent-up passion of a lifetime was now being held by what seemed to Jimmy, who was no cynic, but a mere active and experienced man of the world, dangerously frail barriers. He listened and looked out upon the dazzling color of Alexandria and wondered what she was really like. They swept with a great clatter of hoofs and cracking of the whip into a crowded street and presently drew up at the curb.

"Now for a climb," said the Captain. "No lifts here, you know."

When they had reached the uppermost floor but one the Captain said he would go on first, "to prepare her mind," as he put it.

Jimmy watched his tall rangy figure vanish round the turn of the stairs, and then took a deep breath. So this was love. He felt most the pathos of it. What agonies of heart and mind, to achieve the mere elements of happiness! Perhaps it was that toil and the attending danger, that made the adventure so tenderly sweet. Jimmy looked at his cigarette. He was no cynic, as has been said, but he knew enough of the world, and of photography, to be philosophic about this wondrous creature hidden away upstairs. Well—he looked along the passage as one of the doors opened and a woman in a chemise and petticoat looked out. Seeing him she withdrew and closed the door with phenomenal slowness, until Jimmy saw but one bright inquisitive eye at the crack of it. There was a smell of stale patchouli in the air. The door closed with a click.

He was beginning to wonder how long it took to prepare a girl's mind for so simple a problem as himself, when he heard a

heavy footfall, and Captain Linder, his face drawn, his mouth pinched in over his teeth, his hands clenched and his body crouched, appeared at the turn. He stood there staring at the man below him, frowning horribly, as though his life suddenly hung upon his remembering something in the irretrievable past. Jimmy went up toward him, at once.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Captain Linder turned and led the way up. A door stood open; the bunch of keys swung gently from the lock. They went into a little room full of gimcrack French furniture. The flowers in the vases were dead. A heavy coating of dust lay on the table and piano. In the room beyond, a bed had the sheets thrown over the foot-rail, revealing a yellow mattress with a white circle of flock showing in the middle. There was a faint squeaking and Jimmy saw something moving there, and realized with a shock that it was a nest of young mice. An enormous cockroach rushed over the floor and vanished. Jimmy had a sensation of a long period of time passing. He heard a strange sound. He made an effort and he was at length able to identify the sound. It came from Captain Linder, who was making marks in the dust of the table with a letter he had picked up from the floor. He was repeating the word "Gone!" in a low tone, as though it were something new and curious, something with which he had had no previous acquaintance.

JIMMY RUSSELL was never able to see himself as an adventurous man. He always avoided danger when possible. And one of the principles he had found most useful to him in his career was to regard women as the most subtle of dangers. He was kind, he was polite, he was sporting. There had been occasions when he had "played round" as he phrased it, when the chance had come his way, when the episode had been one of those exquisite, uncalculated timeless things, like a pebble dropped in an Alpine lake, unseen by the world, and fused in his memory with the general beauty of life. But as a practical camera-man he figured that love-affairs on a grand scale were perilous. He made excuses on the grounds that he was engaged. He had invented a romance for himself, as some animals assume protective coloring in danger. He had a photograph in a traveling wallet of an extremely attractive girl. He had carried this symbol of fidelity so long he half believed in it. He had found the negative in a dark-room he had once rented in London. Admiring the pose, it was a simple matter to take a print. She was a dark girl, wearing a dress that revealed the robust beauty of her person. Jimmy liked slender blonde girls, but he fancied that if he were ever "caught" it would be by one of the others, a brunette with the devil in her. There might be vanity in this vague instinctive view. Men often delude themselves with the notion that what they fear is desirable.

And his first impulse when he found himself alone in Captain Linder's confidence at that dreadful climax was to withdraw. After all he couldn't see what he, an alien stranger just arrived, would be able to do. The only counsel he could think of was to consult the police. But for some reason a Syrian girl who had disappeared would be of small interest to police composed of Arabs and Soudanese with French officers. The neighbors said they knew nothing save that more than a week ago the little Arab servant told them she could not get into Miss Mansour's apartment. Some one had seen Marie Mansour hanging clothes on the line on the roof, and the clothes were still there, blown under the parapet. That was all. She was swallowed up in a city of four hundred

thousand people, of a dozen diverse races. To Jimmy it was a problem beyond his powers. He had said so. Captain Linder had frowned, turned heavily upon him and muttered, his shaking hand on his mouth.

"Oh—you! Of course. Let me think."

Jimmy had left him thinking, in that sad place, and had gone back to his hotel, angry with himself because he could do nothing to help a man in such agony.

AND that evening after dinner he had met the laughing young man of the Rue Cléopâtre. He had been thinking, as he sat at a little green table in front of the Café Samsoun in the great Place Mohammed Aly, with an entirely fresh curiosity about that phantom fiancée of his own, and what he would do supposing she were a reality to him and he lost her. What would he do? He smoked several cigarettes over the problem. Even supposing she wasn't married to a convict on Pantelleria, supposing she had been of his own race, the difficulties were alarming. As for Captain Linder—

And then the laughing young man, who afterwards told Jimmy that he lived in the Rue Cléopâtre, "the only man in that street," came and sat down at the next table, smiled, held out an unlighted cigarette for the favor of a match, and remarked in a rich hoarse voice that it was a delightful evening.

Jimmy said it was, passed the matches and when the waiter arrived with *granita* and coffee made a gesture of invitation to the young man, who rose a little from his seat, lifted his hat a little from his handsome curly head, and showed all his fine teeth in a smile of acceptance. He moved his chair to Jimmy's table and began a monologue of light chatter. He spoke English very well indeed, with an occasional mastery of satirical idiom and abstract allusions rather impressive in one so young. Indeed, the memory Jimmy Russell carried away with him when he left Alexandria was that this young man was a sort of incarnation of the city—ageless, merciless, magically intelligent and devoid of feeling. He might have belonged to any period of her history, with his slave-bangles on his wrist, his ring with a stone of lapis-lazuli, his handsome, boyish yet Casarean face.

So he might have remained a vagrant memory had not Jimmy asked him where he learned his English.

"In the American Mission," replied the young man, and added that his mother was a Syrian from Jerusalem. He laughed gaily.

"I am, what you call, unfortunate!" he exclaimed. "All the same, I hope to succeed in life! I am in a bank. A very good position. My mother, with whom I live, in the Rue Cléopâtre, is very pleased. If you wish any bank business, I will be very glad." He took out his card and handed it to Jimmy, with a smile.

It was here that Jimmy's mind recurred to his friend Captain Linder. He saw from the card that Mr. Enrico Yakoub represented the Royal Etrurian Bank, Rue de l'Ancienne Bourse. He looked at it, and then at the young gentleman.

"Hm," he began, thoughtfully. "Thank you. By the way, did you ever hear of a man named Arouani?"

The young man threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"Of course I have heard of Arouani," he replied. "What do you want to know about him?" he bubbled happily, as though Arouani were an irresistible joke.

"Perhaps it is not the same man," said Jimmy, not very certain of his ground.

"The police arrested him and the Government sent him to Italy. He is doing time," giggled Mr. Yakoub. "For uttering forged bank-notes."

ARCOLA REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. warms the family upstairs -

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FIGHTING winter with stoves is like fighting wolves with a pop-gun. L. F. Kammerer of Mankato, Minn., tried it.

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"That's the man. Did you know he had a wife?"

This seemed very funny to the young man. He threw away his cigarette stub with a dashing gesture and applied himself to his *granita*.

"So have everybody a wife," he mused.

"Then you never saw her or—anything?"

Mr. Enrico Yakoub looked up, and for a moment there was a mature gravity in his beautiful brown eyes.

"Me? No. I—I am too young," he said, with a ringing metallic accent on the last word, and for a moment Jimmy had an uncanny sensation that it was a woman gazing at him.

"She was, like yourself, a Syrian," he remarked. Mr. Yakoub leaned forward.

"Ye-s?" he murmured, interested at last. "How you know all this? You—you have an interest in this lady?"

Jimmy Russell thought rapidly and decided that this was an excellent suggestion. He nodded. He explained along those lines.

"And I come back and find she is gone. Nobody in the house knows where she went."

MR. YAKOUB pushed his ice away and folded his arms on the table. He stared very hard at his companion. To Jimmy it was clear the young gentleman was trying to recall something. When the smile left his face he was like "a greedy young pagan god," as Jimmy phrased it afterwards. It was a strange blending of beauty and cupidity. Suddenly he blinked and showed his teeth in a broad grin.

"I tell you," he exclaimed. "You want to find this girl? You make it worth something to me, eh?"

"Sure. How much you want?"

"Five pound. I'll find anybody in this town for five pound! I *think* I know, but I'm not sure, where she is."

"What?" said Jimmy. He was upset by the calmness of the young man's announcement.

"Yes," insisted the laughing young man from the Rue Cléopâtre, the Street of the Women. "What you say? Five hundred piasters?"

"Two hundred," said Jimmy, and the young man, who would have taken the job for fifty, laughed and said:

"All right. We take a cab. You stop at the Savoy Hotel, eh?"

"How did you know that?" demanded Jimmy, signaling the waiter.

"I see you come out, and I follow you down the Rue Chérif Pasha," said Mr. Enrico Yakoub. "I think—he is new tourist. Perhaps tomorrow he visit my bank. I speak English, Arabic, Italian, French, Greek, all with great fluency." And he giggled as he hailed a passing carriage.

For Jimmy Russell that was a notable evening. His only regret afterward was that he had no camera. Mr. Enrico Yakoub took him into a great many sinks of iniquity and past a good many other places. They visited in particular a huge lazy Circassian girl whose blonde head was bound with a circle made of ten-dollar gold pieces. With this voluptuous milk-fed creature Mr. Yakoub conversed in a melodious tongue while every hawker between the Boulevard Rameh and the sea tried to sell Jimmy a variety of articles ranging from peanuts to shoe-laces, from cotton socks to Turkish delight.

"She says," said the young man, shoving a lemonade-seller, with his clinking cups, out of the way. "She says Melwalli Bey is the one most likely to have done this thing."

"Allah destroy thee!" screamed the vendor in between his cries.

"Thy mother was a cow of no discretion!" he was informed with staggering suddenness by the smiling young gentleman, who spat Arabic like a camel-driver.

"Well?" said Jimmy doubtfully. The racket about him, the lights, the press of strange people bothered him.

"Well, everybody in the Rue Cléopâtre knows that Melwalli Bey had trouble in his house before he went to hunt gazelles at Siwah. That is in the Libyan desert. Two weeks ago." Mr. Yakoub looked at Jimmy's serious face and laughed. "You don't understand, eh? Well, I will explain to you. Melwalli Bey, he is rich. Big house here at Mex. Big house in Cairo. Big house in the Oasis, for to hunt the gazelle. With eagles. Great sport. And Melwalli Bey, he have what you call, big family? No, big establishment. Oh, he like the pretty girls! As we say, he have a beautiful garden. He make them rich. I know he have trouble in his house because Krysanthia Sigalas, in the Rue Cléopâtre, near my house, she tell my mother she get twenty thousand piasters for a ring Melwalli Bey give her. She's a Greek girl. She run away from his house in Mex. She was in the garden." He made a grimace.

"Wait a minute. Let me get this straight," said Jimmy. He spoke in French for he suspected that the young man's English would distort his meaning. Mr. Yakoub nodded and replied with mellifluous fluency.

"Yes. That is how it is. Some of his men take her. No, by-and-by, they let her go. Now we go to see a friend of mine."

They took another carriage and drove out into the light and noise of the Boulevard Rameh. The laughing young man led Jimmy up a narrow side-street until they reached a drug-store with colored globes on brackets in the window. An old gentleman wearing a fez came out of a room at the back. An Arab boy in a white robe was sweeping the shop. Mr. Yakoub spoke in Arabic to the old gentleman, who ushered them into the back room. There was nobody to be seen, only chairs and divans, and it was lighted by a lamp with a yellow shade. The old gentleman followed them in and kept his eyes on Jimmy in a watchful manner.

"No?" said Mr. Yakoub, and when he found that his employer had no intention of experimenting with hashish he ordered coffee and plain cigarettes. When they were alone he told Jimmy that Melwalli Bey got his supplies here.

Jimmy sat and listened to the two of them talking in a low tone. What they said was beyond him. He saw the old man looking at him in a condoling fashion, and he suddenly remembered he was supposed to be the lost girl's lover. Suddenly Mr. Yakoub leaned over and said in English:

"Mr. Lekegian, here, he says there is a Syrian girl in Melwalli Bey's house. She was there while the Bey went to Siwah. You see? I told you. Now Melwalli Bey is come back, but the girl—he don't want her. She,"—here Mr. Yakoub giggled,—"she fight all the time! And Mr. Lekegian say Melwalli Bey bring back two dancing girls, Ouled Nails, from the desert. You understand?"

"Yes," said Jimmy. "I know the Ouled Nails. I saw them at Laghouat. What next?"

AT first Jimmy thought his young friend had reached the end of his rope. He gnawed his thumb. But he suddenly sprang up and went out into the shop, where there was a telephone. He began a passionate declamation into the thing, whirling the crank in a frenzied fashion. Jimmy strolled to the door and watched him. He was speaking with great rapidity. Jimmy heard the word "American." Then more and yet more conversation. And a sudden conclusion. Mr. Yakoub rang off, smiling.

"You owe me two hundred piasters!" he exclaimed in a ringing voice.

"Where is she?" asked Jimmy.

"We go now," replied the young man, as though he were the owner of magic carpets and the keys of all the cities.

HE remembered the scented night as they drove beneath the sycamores, and the fireflies among the shrubs. The sparkle of the trolley on the wire among the leaves, when a jangling open tram-car went past. The glimpses of villas through the trees, the residences so dear to the French in North Africa, verandahed and homelike, yet with a faint suggestion about them of being the abodes of the mistresses of kings in exile. The smell of jasmine. The distant glare of Alexandria. And the house, the garden of the Bey.

He remembered a large reception room, with Berber blankets and weapons on the walls, and with eagles, in glass cases, whose prominent and malevolent eyeballs reflected the light of the lamps with a stern, magnified stare. The pathetic heads of gazelles stretched out from the walls, as though straining to watch their stuffed enemies below, their terror persisting into the Beyond.

And he remembered Melwalli Bey, a man very much as Mr. Yakoub would be in twenty years time. He was polite and smiling. He spoke easily and well, of Biskra and Ghardaia. When he heard the name of Achmed Ben Yalloul, who had entertained his guest in the Atlas, his manner changed to sincerity and pleasure. Would the visitor like to witness a dance of the Ouled Nails? They were about to begin. He, Melwalli Bey, had a party of friends from Cairo. As for the young friend of Monsieur, since receiving the telephone message from his secretary he had had inquiries made. One of his staff had been a little hasty. For himself, he had not even seen her. Now would the visitor honor his poor place by witnessing The young friend? Ah, but she was already gone, in a motorcar, to her house.

He remembered the dancers, too, as one remembers grandiose and ominous dreams. He saw them at the end of a darkened room, where tall Nubians, like statues of bronze and ebony, held smoking torches. He saw them, that strange vital race of mountaineers, whose women descend to the cafés of the oases and coast towns of Algeria and are coveted by the wealthy men of those places because of their ferocious and plangent artistry. They expressed, in their supple and rhythmic posturings, the fundamental instincts of the desert people. He heard the music too, that came out of the flame-lit gloom—hoarse sobbing flutes and impudent boyish fifes, drums like the shattering collisions of coffins overturned by ghouls, the faint heart-piercing plaints of mandolins, like the cries of departing spirits. He remembered it all, as a barbaric setting to the poignant errand on which he had been bound.

AND when the shining French motorcar of Melwalli Bey stopped (for the second time that evening) in the Rue des Sœurs, just off the Place Mohammed Aly, Jimmy Russell decided that he would go up and see the thing to a finish. Mr. Yakoub, with his two hundred piasters, and an extra fifty for a guarantee of good faith, shook his hand with extraordinary vigor and went away laughing, and vanished into the great lighted square as though he were indeed but the embodiment of the city's enigmatic complexity, and was now absorbed into it once more. Jimmy saw him next day, in the Royal Etrurian Bank, a pen behind his ear, counting little heaps of gold and laughing like a child, a pretty child, at play.

So he went up and for a moment, as he stood at the door and tapped, he had an unpleasant hallucination that he had been asleep and had dreamed about Melwalli Bey. That passed, and Captain Linder opened the door.

"Come in," he said.

Jimmy was aware of a hurried exit to the other room as he entered. Captain Linder frowned.

"Just as well you looked in again," he remarked. "You see, it is all right."

"That's good," said Jimmy. "I was wondering."

"Yes," said Captain Linder. "She was away. You might say, she was detained."

Jimmy looked round. The dust had disappeared. There was a faint odor of food and tobacco in the air. The vases held fresh flowers. He heard vigorous sounds from the next room as of some one engaged in putting things straight. He looked at the Captain. "Detained," repeated Captain Linder. "So it shows how dangerous it is

to jump to conclusions. I nearly did it myself. Visiting friends, that's all."

"Well," said Jimmy, taking a cigarette, "I'm glad."

"Nor it isn't all, neither," went on the Captain. He reached back from where he sat and took a letter from the little buffet. "This came while she was away. I found it when I came up. You didn't notice perhaps. It says—"

The door of the other room opened swiftly, as though the woman in there had mustered her courage and achieved it at last, and Marie Mansour entered the room. She was pale and there were dark hollows under her eyes, but she smiled a little and bowed. She had that patient provocative expression Jimmy had noted in the photo-

graphs, as though she did not quite understand, but wished to gratify the object of her adoration.

"It says," went on Captain Linder, reaching out and taking the girl's hand, "that Eugenio Arouani, Number Twelve Hundred and Seven, died in the hospital of Pantelleria one month ago. So you see," he added, putting down the letter and looking severely at his visitor, "it's better to wait, and not jump to conclusions."

Jimmy saw the girl look down at her lover with an expression of profoundly maternal solicitude, as though she had suddenly understood that men's happiness lies in illusions, while for women there is the more perilous adventure of seeing beyond, into reality.

LORDS AND LADIES

(Continued from page 71)

tended to him that she had not seen Ralph, from the moment when, at her taunt, he had left England to live alone and to dig in the earth, up to the moment when she had imperiously sent for Carey from Italy, and sent him back to Italy on her fantastic quest.

It was Ralph Dunedin who had told him. They did not speak of Sylvia, for she had forbidden it. "You were sent, of course," Dunedin had said, roughly, when Carey had duly delivered his message, of which the purport had been the postponement of a certain Wistaria Ball, owing to entirely unreasonable reasons, from May the fifteenth to May the twenty-second: "Which will leave you plenty of time, of course," said Carey; "for tomorrow is only May the twentieth." To which Dunedin had replied: "She sent you."

It was not a question, but a statement. Carey held up his hand in quick protest. "Be merciful, please! If a certain lady's name is mentioned, even so much as the initial of her name, I shall be turned into a frog!"

"The initial of her name is 'S,'" said Dunedin, and with some curiosity waited for the conjuring trick. . . .

RUFUS CAREY remained human in form. "No, I was wrong about the initial. But don't let it go any further, for there are frogs enough here, and to spare." And indeed, the whole night on the hillside was awake with loud croaking choruses.

"If we are to talk," Dunedin said, "and it looks as though we were going to talk, it will be difficult to leave her out; but we will call her 'Madame X'; or, in the style of Rider Haggard, 'She-who-must-be-obeyed,' or even, in the style of Mr. Michael Arlen, 'That hopeful, hopeless Lady'—whichever pleases you. And I am *not* going to her confounded Wistaria Ball!"

And, after that, as the young man had prophesied, they did sit and talk, in that dim room of vaulted ceiling and stone floor. And past the open doorway, an early firefly trailed its glitter and was gone again. . . .

"You don't care for dancing?" Carey had questioned, casually. "Not for dancing with, let us say, a certain lady very like Circe must have been; and not at all like Helen, who was too gold and white for my fancy, but with a memory of Medea, that lovely dark young witch?"

Ralph Dunedin laughed: "Why, I danced with her less than three months ago, out there, on that patch of lawn; she told you, didn't she?"

"Yes," lied Carey; and a minute later, glumly and heavily, he said: "No, she did not tell me." And now he knew beyond question that Sylvia loved this man who would not come to her ball unless he were fetched; loved him enough to come to his

ball, which was not a ball at all, but a fantastic, foolish affair of one couple on a patch of grass surrounded by twisted olives. For what lady but a lady in love would come all this way to dance, where there was no Quentin's band, but frog choruses instead?

"But she might have told me!" . . . Why, curse her beauty! And did she then imagine that a man would travel to and fro between Italy and England, three times, perhaps, in twice as many days, to be told lies for guerdon? And as she had been here, could she not at least have told him the way, instead of prating elusively of "three miles outside Porto Felipo," and a bay-tree for his only guide? He had wasted the hours between five and eleven o'clock finding his way here, and would never have found it had he not been a gentleman of uncommon skill and competence. So, feeling childish as well as surly, and having no one there but Ralph to whom to complain, he did just say: "She might at least have told me the way!"

"I doubt if she knew it!" And he laughed again, but joyously this time, as one who is pleased at some mischievous prank. "You see, she brought her car from Monte Carlo, as far as the road, two kilometers away; and then she wandered up and down these broken terraces like a lost soul, until at last, and mostly by accident, she found me. Perhaps she heard me cursing, for I had just bent up a corner of my spade against a stone, in ground that is mostly stone. And when she went away, not very much later, for we only danced the length of an ordinary, conventional, ballroom dance, complete with all its formalities, why, then I blindfolded her, and led her to the very outskirts of the olive groves; and I turned her round three times to bewilder her, and left her."

"Why did you do that?" inquired Carey, curiously.

"I did not want her to find her way here again."

"Why?"

"I wanted to be left alone."

"Why?"

"She disturbed me at my work," said Dunedin.

AND because, in his faded blue shirt, open at the throat, and his rough velveteen breeches and his shabby old leather belt, he looked exceedingly powerful and muscular, and very like an illustration on the cover of those books that deal with strong men in conflict with the soil, Carey had taken for granted that he was doing well and successfully, and was wrestling many splendid fruits from the ground, and so forth. And he said so, congratulating him. And Ralph Dunedin had cried out, sharply: "I've done no good at all. I'm a failure, I tell you, and I'm going to chuck it. These—these damned lords and ladies!" And he buried his head in his arms, and sobbed!

"They grow everywhere," Ralph had explained, a few minutes later. "Lords and ladies, weeds and parasites. They are in the very heart of the land; they choked up my artichokes, and they are choking up the vines. Their roots go down for miles in the ground, long, writhing, sickly, white tubes. You think you have them up, but they break, and grow again—millions of them. They swell into hateful monotonous flowers, pale and green, like phantom lilies. My strength all gets sucked out of me, fighting the lords and ladies; and I am single-handed, and they are choking up my vines. I'm going to chuck it, I tell you. When is this Wistaria Ball? On May the twenty-second? There's just time. Let her think she was right; let them all think so! I don't mind. But they were wrong when they laughed; I was *not* posing. In a queer sort of way, I still find this sort of life good, and better than all others! I could have done something with it, if it hadn't been for the lords and ladies."

And *brek-k-kek-ek!* the frogs croaked scornfully, like a chorus from Aristophanes. *Brek-ek-kek-ek. . . . Ko-ax—ko-ax.*

Carey was glad, now, that he had come. For he saw, being older than Ralph Dunedin, and not inclined to take despondency for an eternal mood, that the man was at an emotional crisis; and that another man's warm heartening at this crisis would turn him back to his conflict with the lords and ladies, which eventually, no doubt, could be thrown out of the soil, and thrown out, until they returned no more. And he saw, too, that having survived the crisis—which was less from lack of courage than a collapse of the nerves, which happens sometimes when the hypercivilized turn peasant—what Dunedin needed most, indeed, was a companion out there to dance with him sometimes, when his work was done, on the terraces of clipped grass outside the door of the house among the olives.

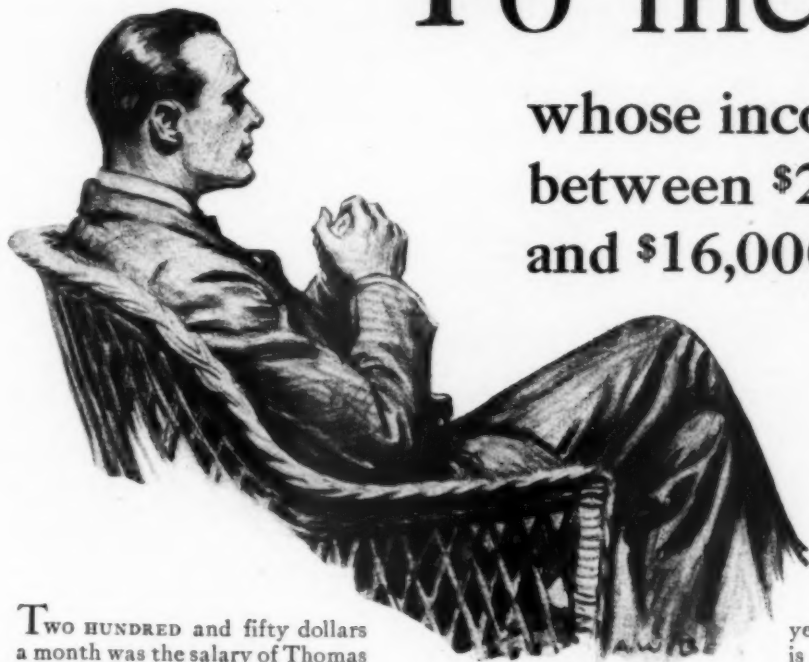
RUFUS OLIVER CAREY did not hear a light footstep behind him, as he sat brooding by moonlight in that little railed square somewhere in Mayfair. So when Sylvia's hand touched his shoulder, and he turned, and saw her shrouded in a long cloak which seemed to be of mist lined with flame, he was quite of the opinion that one need rise from one's seat merely to chat with a wraith.

"I hope," he said, conversationally, "that this doesn't mean that the real you is dead? You are, I presume, merely a projection. I especially admire the way I can discern, through your transparency, the outline of the fountain behind you. Good evening, ghost of Sylvia! How goes the ball down at Brestock?"

"I saw you from my window," said Sylvia, and sat down beside him on the bench. "The ball? I don't know! I de-

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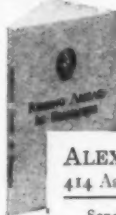
"It is not sufficient," he writes, "to say that I have received more than the price of the Course from every volume in it. I must mention the immediate returns. When I enrolled I was employed as a clerk by the Missouri State Life Insurance Company. Within four months I awoke to the fact that I was wasting my time as a clerk." (This is the first effect of the Course on thousands of men. It gives them a new view and plan; they determine to strike out on a new line. Mr. Farris transferred into the selling department of his Company.) He continues: "At the end of the year I was devoting all my time to selling and my income

had risen to \$250 a month. Last year my income was a little over \$16,000.

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year.) He goes on to say, "There is a lot of comfort, however, in being successful while you are still young enough to enjoy it. . . . I still use the texts to advantage. I have given them severe tests and I have never met a problem in business that was not answered in them. All these facts can easily be verified."

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cided not to go; wistaria is not pretty a week after its glory."

Carey gave his opinion that modern ways are all very well, but he believed in the old-fashioned style of a hostess being there to receive her guests, instead of wandering about conversing with stray lunatics in a railinged square in Mayfair.

"My dear lunatic, if you consulted 'Country Homes and Country Lives,' and 'Our English Country-Seats,' and other of these society journals as often as you should, you would be aware that Brestock is the property of the Earl of Wenston, and that the proper hostess at the Wistaria Ball is his daughter, Lady Stella Paravane. You saw her for a moment, didn't you, coming out of my room, just as you happened to stroll in with my telegram in your hand?"

Some elusive suspicion wavered like a drift of gossamer athwart Oliver Carey's memory. He had meant to accuse Sylvia of something—what was it?—directly he saw her. *What was it?* And then he remembered.

"Sylvia," he thundered, startling her calm, "why did you lie to me? Why did you pretend that you knew nothing of Ralph Dunedin's whereabouts, except that he was three miles distant from Porto Felipo? Why didn't you tell me, Sylvia, that one night you had danced with him among the olives outside his house? Don't you remember how the frogs croaked *brek-ek-ek-ek-ek?*"

But Sylvia's eyes were clouded with perplexity. "I have never—" she stammered, and this was the first time he had ever seen her at a loss for her usual lazy, mocking, silver-witted speech. "Never! *She* did, oh, she *did*, and she never told me!" Sylvia cried, aloud. "But I remember, she was at Monte, in February."

"Who did?"

"Stella, Lady Stella Paravane, that slim bronze girl whom you saw. Oh, don't you understand, Oliver? It was *her* story I told you, not mine. It was on *her* errand that you went; and if you succeeded, why, Ralph is now dancing at her Wistaria Ball!"

And the gossamer cleared away from Carey's brain, so that he now saw, sharp and clear like the ring of sword upon sword,

how easily he could have been tricked; and how a Certain Lady of whom he and Dunedin had spoken, sitting together in that little vaulted stone room, in Italy, might equally well have been disdainful Stella as disdainful Sylvia. He did not ask why again, hoping that his own unaided understanding might catch at the clue, and solve the puzzle. For it is a truth that all men hate to ask the way, whether from St. James' to Regent's Park, or when lost among a maze of ladies' motives, and ladies' murmured hints; they prefer to go astray; they prefer to walk for miles!

But Sylvia stole a look at his brows, hard-knitted, and she remarked, carelessly: "It seemed a pity to waste a willing knight-errant, when he turned up so *à propos*! Stella had been waiting up all night and half the early morning, down at Brestock, to see if Ralph would come to the ball which she had postponed. And when he did not come, she just rushed up to tell me about it; and then you arrived, Oliver, from Italy. It was so easy, for me, to put 'I' into a story, instead of 'she'!"

"It is not so easy," said Carey, without looking at her, "to put love, shall we say, into a voice, instead of friendliness. Unless you mean love. *Why* did you send me, Sylvia?"

"To fetch a lord home to a lady."

"If you loved the lord, and if you were not the lady?"

"Why," spoke Sylvia, dropping her words softly like bubbles into the pool of moonlight at their feet, "why, Oliver, did you bother to travel out to Italy to fetch home a certain lord to a certain lady, if you loved the lady, and if you were not the lord?"

"One is sometimes that sort of fool," said Rufus Oliver Carey.

And, "One is sometimes that sort of a fool," echoed Sylvia.

BUT what Carey has never yet understood, and what Sylvia will not tell him, for all his teasing and persuasion, is why she ever sent him that telegram. He has never understood that to one story, and to one lord, there were three ladies: Sylvia, Stella, and that third unknown who had sent him the telegram!

THE COMEBACK OF LADY COURAGEOUS

(Continued from page 59)

they're playin' Burton's entry like it was all over, an' I don't like the looks of the field. Some of them lizards got no business bein' in there. They've got no chance to win, and I can't figure a boy like 'Toughy' Kress bein' wasted on a forty-to-one shot. Take my hunch, Sandy, and tell your jock' if he can't break in front, he'd better stay out of it entirely."

But just then the paddock bell rang, and before McKee could reconcile his mind to accepting this last-minute advice, the parade to post had started. . . .

Now, by the beard of the Prophet, no man can achieve the heights of happiness who has not first experienced the depths of despair. Behold the pendulum swinging wide to the dark side of the arc!

The field broke in a tangle, and then came rushing past the stands, the Burton colt in the lead by a short head, and the others dangerously jammed as they fought for position on the first turn. The flying leader held to his advantage. He forged clear and set the pace. Two others dropped into place behind him. The balance were sweeping around the turn in a buff-colored screen of dust. Concealed within this cloud, something happened. Not even the straining eyes of the Information Kid, nor those of the patrol judge were able to see who had caused the crash. But suddenly the inner railing broke under the weight of a horse that had been crowded off the track. Whitewashed wood parted like tissue paper, and a bay filly toppled over in a complete side-somersault, all four legs in the air, flinging a blur of cerise and green violently against the infield.

It was over so quickly that the majority of spectators, with their eyes glued to the front contenders, were not aware of the tragedy until the race was over, the Burton colt in the winner's circle, and a white ambulance was speeding down the track to pick up an unconscious boy.

Old Judge Trendall summoned before him almost every boy in the race, and spent several minutes in cross-examining Jockey Kress, but apparently it was an accident,

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and presently the official "O. K." was hung up, and the crowd rushed for the pay-off windows. When the pari-mutuel prices were posted, the clerk chalked up a notice for the information of the crowd. It read:

"Boy unhurt."

Spectators showed their relief with a mild patter of applause, and then turned their attention to the next race on the program.

Only the Information Kid and a small group of sympathetic valets and "swipes," helping as best as they could, knew the full extent of the tragedy. Tucky Bells had snapped an ankle bone, and Sandy McKee was shorn of his all!

Old Doc Commerford, the best veterinarian on the American turf and the laziest man in the world, took one look at Tucky Bells and another at Sandy McKee.

"I think," he told the Information Kid, "we'd better shoot 'em both!"

"Why waste cartridges?" asked the hustler sadly. "The murder's been done, and I want to tell you right now, I'm one of the casualties."

"How's that?"

The Kid lit a cigarette, exhaled wearily, and shrugged. "I thought it was going to be the best bet of the year, and I sent it out by wire to the wide, wide world with the old three stars on it. The boy that crowded Tucky Bells into the ditch sure did his stuff. Busted the fence, a filly's leg, an old man's heart, my reputation, and the bank rolls of my clients. Yea, bo! I'll bet I'm being damned right now from Forty-seventh Street to where the flying fishes play. If you listen good you can hear the howl comin' up out of China 'cross the bay!"

Old Doc Commerford laughed tolerantly and patted his paunch. "I can hear enough howling close at hand without stretching my ears. I'm going fishing tomorrow. Tell Sandy to quit sniffing. I've patched worse breaks than that. Filly's slung up and comfortable. She may run again, if he wants to spend time and dough on her. That's the answer—time and dough—and plenty of both."

Allah alone knows what would have happened had not the Information Kid, prompted by compassion alone, canceled his Maryland trip, and assumed a personal protectorate over Sandy McKee. The Scotchman, dazed and helpless, was unable to direct his own affairs.

"I'm going to take you and the filly home," said the Kid. "Like to give your farm the once-over. Jim Tracy's been lookin' for a small place, and maybe you can hit off some kind of a partnership. Anyway, Sandy—you've got my old sweetheart there, and I want to say hello to the Lady."

"Ah," groaned McKee, "that's the hard part of it, lad! That little farm isn't much, but it was where Lady Courageous was foaled and trained, and I wanted it to be the last home for both of us."

"Well, why not?"

"Money," said McKee. "Money! It lies at the bottom of everything, and I have not got it. I brought Lady Courageous back once, but she did not have a broken ankle. The luck ended when I took the old red stockings off and turned the greatest mare in the world out to pasture. God help me, I thought I was doin' right. I thought Tucky Bells would carry the colors in the Handicap—the Handicap—"

His voice broke, and he bowed his head, staring blindly at dry dust, his figure forlorn and broken—an old horseman who had reached the end of the trail.

The young hustler's eyes grew soft and luminous. Something stirred within his breast, and he put an arm around Sandy's shoulders.

"Brace up, old-timer," he encouraged. "Let the frogs do the croaking. We're going to be a couple of sports!"

BACK to the little farm down Lexington way went the Information Kid, transporting a filly with a fractured ankle and an old Scotchman with a crushed heart.

"Fo' Gawd's sake!" said little Bubbles when he beheld the returning caravan. "Aint nothin' missin' but the corpse and slow music! Mawnnin', Marse Kid! Mawnnin', Boss! . . . What the—"

"Shet yo' face, boy!" admonished Snowball. "Shet it quick, else I knows where I gets me a piece o' crape!"

Bubbles subsided, but his rounded eyes watched intently every move of the explanatory drama: the transfer of the crippled Tucky Bells to her old stall; the behavior of Lady Courageous, who seemed to realize that this was a homecoming different from any she had known; the dumb, stony despair of Sandy McKee, and the quiet, comprehending kindness of the Information Kid, usually so blithe and carefree.

Bubbles whispered into the ear of the Lady that night: "Hot dawg, honey! We'll get there yet! Yassuh, ma'am! Does they want pork chops now, they'll have to send us out to get 'em!" . . .

Summer came and waned, and on the New York and Maryland tracks men wondered what had become of the Information Kid. It was a long time since the smiling youth with the gray eyes had missed a season with the faithful.

"Dead, married or in jail," said Peaches McGovern. "Even money and take your choice. Who wants it?"

There were no takers, for it seemed that Peaches had listed all the possible explanations for the Kid's absence.

Truth to tell, the young hustler himself was at a loss to explain his protracted stay on the sleepy Kentucky farm that Sandy McKee loved so well. It had been in his mind to leave as soon as he had straightened out matters for his friend, but the problem proved more difficult than he had foreseen. Grief and financial worry had overburdened the veteran horseman, and he was like a man in a daze, comprehending little that was said or done. The hot summer weeks drifted past, and the Kid stayed on, striving to interpret the will of Allah.

It was little Bubbles who suggested a possible solution:

"Marse Kid, why you doan' put old Lady Courageous in trainin' again? Kain't do no harm, and if Boss ever see 'at ol' girl come roundin' into stretch again with them red stockin's settin' the pace, he'd just about dance hisse'f into Pabadiel!"

"Bubbles," said the Information Kid, "you're full of both hop and wisdom. Not even Allah can make that mare a three-year-old again, but she may be the saving of Sandy McKee. Anything to get his head up. I'll go put the bee in his bonnet, and we'll see what happens."

SANDY was shocked at first, and it was necessary for the Kid to use diplomacy. "No, no, lad! I'll no break my word. I'll no ask it of her. 'Tis no fair."

"All right," said the Kid. "I think she's through anyway. She couldn't run a hundred yards without dropping dead. Too old!"

McKee's face turned a brick red. "Lad, don't vex me! You're crazy! The Lady is only eight years old, and if I said the word she'd go out and win for me tomorrow."

"Yes, she would!" scoffed the Kid. "An eight-year-old brood mare—"

"What of it?" demanded the Scotchman. "Weren't you and I up at Windsor the day Belle Doreen broke the ring? She'd been bred."

"Yes, but she'd been only out one season, and was still in her prime. I don't blame you for lacking confidence in Lady Courageous. I always did think she was a horse that would never mature well. She came back once, but she never could do it again."



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"She could!" insisted McKee. "Sound as a dollar, and she'd train down fine."

"Nope! You're wrong, Sandy. I know horseflesh, and that old battle-axe couldn't stagger six furlongs in two minutes."

McKee's dim eyes lit with an unholy flame. His mouth opened and closed and opened again. "Lad," he announced, "purely for your own good and as a matter of education, I'll take the Lady on the meadow road in the mornin', and work her six furlongs in 1:16."

The Information Kid suppressed a grin. "That stuff goes for the end book," he jeered. "Tell it to Mr. Sweeney, the gentleman who manicures the morgue."

At six o'clock the next morning, the hustler was awakened by a hand on his shoulder. "Get up!" commanded Sandy. "Get up and learn something."

They walked down to the barns where Snowball and little Bubbles had rigged Lady Courageous in her racing garb and already warmed her up. One glance at Sandy's face, and another at the gallant mare, trembling with excitement, and the Information Kid felt like a man who had dug for water and struck gold.

Lady Courageous thought she was returning to the races at last! Memory, the ruling faculty of a horse, had held true through the years. It was thus they used to call for her in the early mornings, with sugar lumps and tender petting. It was thus they used to slip the rigging on and lead her to the track, where with other horses she breezed over the turf, fighting for her head and frantic with the sheer joy of life!

Now, the spirit was still willing, though the flesh was soft, muscles flabby, and lung power enfeebled. Still, in the freshness of that summer morning and the magic inspiration of the moment, the great mare welcomed the challenge with distended nostrils. Desire was hers, and desire lent her temporary wings.

On a hard, dull track, nothing but the rough open road, Bubbles galloped the mare a half-mile and she came within seven seconds of the time that Sandy had boasted she would cover it in. The Information Kid yearned to hug his sweetheart, but he checked the impulse, and wrinkled his nose at Sandy McKee.

"Not so good, Sandy. Runs like she had on Oregon boots. Dirty shame the way you've neglected her. Look how she's blowin' now. Wyne! don't you take off some of that flesh? I don't think that mare will live long if you don't work her regularly. She's cryin' to run, but she's forgotten how. I'm off you, Sandy. I'm goin' back to the races, and the next time I come down here, I want you to make good on that 1:16 stuff. Get me?"

SANDY MCKEE didn't hear him, apparently. The Scotchman was occupied with an old dream that was blooming again in his soul. His worn hands were stroking the velvet muzzle of his pet, and he was whispering to her in fierce, endearing tones. Two pink spots appeared on his cheekbones, and the glint of Scotch stubbornness shone in his eyes.

"Fore Gawd, Marse Kid," muttered little Bubbles. "You done statted sump'n now. Boss has got the ol' haid up again. You-all better get outa here 'fore he messes with yo' neck."

"I'm goin'," said the Kid. "Latonia opens again next week, and I got to make up for lost time. Sandy's got the right kind of tonic now—"

"Sure has," agreed little Bubbles. "Boss is all smoked up again. He's gwine plunge." The Information Kid chuckled. "Ye-ah—a Scotch plunger—risk a whole dollar, and bet it in four books! I'll see you when the robins nest again!"

"Good huntin', Marse Kid!"

The Kid nodded and waved a hand in farewell. "May Allah bless your dice!" said he. "So long, lil' eight-ball!"

Back to Latonia went the young king of the hustlers, feeling that he had wasted a precious spring and summer, and troubled by a vague sense of incompleteness. Sandy McKee's financial problem was still unsolved. True, Sandy had been saved from a mental and physical breakdown, but it had been through the medium of a subterfuge. The Kid felt like a fond parent who had quieted a baby with a patent pacifier and had tiptoed away to liberty. At any moment, the deception might fail, and a yowl go up, bigger than ever.

"Not so good," reflected the Kid. "I should have let old Doc Commerford use his cartridges."

He was more than ever inclined to feel that way when he learned that Boots Burton had bought the great four-year-old Sun-fire for the express purpose of annexing the Pennington Handicap. A Burton victory in that grand old Kentucky classic would be the culminating crown of thorns for Sandy McKee.

AUTUMN was here: brown leaves and a harvest moon. For three days, the Kid had been beating every handicapper on the track. His selections had been rolling down in front with startling consistency, and his followers were betting them high, wide and handsome. Then, a flurry of rain softened the track, calculations went to pieces, Dame Fortune vanished, and Secret Silver, with whom it had been planned to "sink the ship," lost all chance at the start and finished completely out of the money.

Broke and disconsolate, the hustler strolled at dusk down to the railroad station that marks the entrance to Latonia. He was half tempted to chuck it all in favor of some far-distant clime.

"I feel like a Lost Cause!" he mourned. "That's what I get for tryin' to shoot square. Allah, where art Thou?"

There was no answer, and the Kid muttered: "I think I'll change my name to 'Mr. Arthur Bates,' of Looking Glass, Oregon, and sell my customers Grant's Tomb and the sheep in Central Park. I know I can do that! . . . Hello, what have we here?"

From the dark recesses of an express car, drawn up beside an unloading platform, a blanketed mare was being coaxed to earth by two familiar voices:

"Easy, lass! . . . Hold the light up, Bubbles—careful, lad, for the life of ye! . . . 'Yassuh, Boss! Come 'long heah, Lady, follow yo' lil' Moses to the Promised Land!"

The Information Kid stepped forward. "Well, by the God Whom I worship! If it aint Sandy McKee and his lil' ink bubble! Brothers, I greet you. Where'd you get the go-getter, Sandy? Tip me to your friend in the bathrobe."

"Have you no eyes in the dark?" demanded McKee. "Look again, lad, and you'll see the winner of the Pennington Handicap."

The Kid swept a light hand over velvet nostrils and glanced down at the bandaged forelegs. "Lady Courageous!" he breathed.

McKee flared up: "What's the matter? Don't you think she can do it?"

The hustler hesitated a moment, and then said kindly: "Why, sure, Sandy. Anything's possible on a racetrack. Put it here, Brother! The old cerise and green forever, eh, Sandy! 'Atta spirit, ol' timer! What was done once, can be done again. Yea, bo!"

But late at night, as he lay in a hotel room, reading, his thoughts drifted away from the printed pages and he laid down the book, musing aloud: "The hell of it is, it's going to be one of those cases of 'so near, and yet so far.' That grand little mare will come back a long ways, but not far enough—and she'll break her heart in the attempt,

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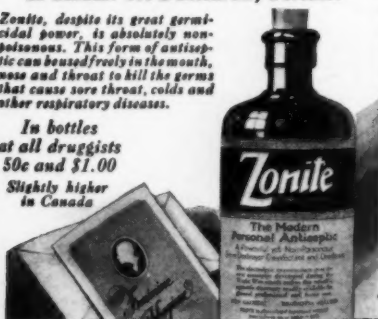
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—break Sandy's heart, too! My fault, I guess. I kidded the old boy into it and he's kidded the horse, and the two of them are livin' in a hophead's paradise. Hop! H'm. . . ."

He slept restlessly, tormented by fantastic dreams.

DAY after day thereafter, as the fall season progressed, Sandy McKee confidently "pointed" the mare for the Pennington Handicap, and the Information Kid—watching with shrewd yet sympathetic eyes—began to feel more sorry for the mare than for her master. Hope and pride had put blinkers on Sandy's eyes, but Lady Courageous seemed to realize her own deficiencies.

Her eyes had a frightened, dumb appeal that had never been there before. Outwardly she had trained down to perfect racing trim. Sandy had accomplished a miracle in that respect. But the fire of youth was gone, the sacred flame of fervor was burning low. Equine intelligence seemed to realize what was being asked of her, and she strove to respond as gallantly as before. But something was missing, she knew not what, and gradually her confidence melted.

Had it been in the spring of the year—when the sap stirs in all living things—and old thoroughbreds lift their heads from the meadow grass to listen wide-eyed as though a mystic bugle had blown, the resurrection might have been accomplished easily enough. But this was the autumn-season of dying hope, and Lady Courageous sensed the full burden of her years. Not of her own strength could she rise to the occasion. A miracle of rejuvenation was necessary.

When the morning workouts were over, the mare nuzzled her owner's shoulder as though pleading for an explanation of her failure to shake off the horses that she galloped with, setting the pace. Time was when she would have run them off their feet, and then gone on about her business.

"Seems like she's kind o' daid, Boss—" Bubbles complained as he brought her back one morning. "Picks 'em up and lays 'em down regular enough for a mile or mo', but when us goes to make our move, she aint got that last ounce that us needs. Yassuh. Boss, she tries to give it to me, but it jes' aint there!"

The little negro knew whereof he spoke. He had an uncanny faculty for sizing up men and horses; and just as he sensed that Sandy McKee's judgment was no longer to be relied upon, so also he knew that Lady Courageous, out of the game too long, would be beaten before she went to the post. The golden daughter of Lord Valor and True Blue had lost her old-time confidence.

A calendar hung on the wall of Sandy's tackle-room. A red circle had been drawn around "Pennington Day," and each evening the old Scotchman reduced the intervening gap with the stub of a pencil. There were but five more days to wait. Sandy's serene confidence was the marvel of all who beheld it. But Lady Courageous only nosed nervously at her food, and walked her stall at night. Her eyes lacked luster, and the queenly head, though high flung as of yore, seemed to feel the pressure of impending humiliation. . . .

Meanwhile the stage had been gradually set for the Pennington Handicap, a mile and a quarter Kentucky classic for all-age horses. A dozen contenders had been given careful preparation for the event, and their preliminary performances had been closely watched. Public speculation was already keen. As usual, stable rumors were being bandied from mouth to mouth, most of them deliberately started with the idea of influencing the betting ring. Rapid River, the Fordham entry, was supposed to have bled in a secret workout. The great four-year-old Sunfire, certain to be the public choice, was now said to have pulled up

sore, and it was whispered that Boots Burton was undecided whether or not to start the horse.

The Information Kid found himself in great demand. Speculators trusted him where they wouldn't have taken the word of their own mothers. The young hustler smiled wanly and shook his head. "Boys," he told them, "this is one race you'll have to pick for yourself, and if you take my advice, you'll lay off. There's a horse in there that I can't bet on, and I wont bet against."

"How 'bout Sunfire?"

"Ready to run over the moon. So's Rapid River. Worked a mile in thirty-eight this morning with his mouth open. Hop to it, if you like 'em."

"Mind tellin' us, Kid, what horse you wont bet against?"

"Not at all. It's Lady Courageous."

"What? That old plug?"

The Information Kid tightened his lips and walked away. So that was the fate that faced his lady! The jeers and ridicule of the racing rabble! Condemned to run her heart out in vain, her lungs choked in the defeating dust of an enemy!

He groaned, and then an inner voice whispered to him. "If she only could come back for just an hour—a hop-head's dream—hop! Hop!"

He strove to close his mind against a thought that set him trembling, for he loved his lady—loved her for the gallant qualities that were hers by nature, and never in all his life had he broken the rules of the game he followed. Woven into the fiber of his character was a code of honor that was all his own. He took exquisite satisfaction in the knowledge that "Sunday School John" had once said of him: "There's the only boy in the game who really loves horses and abides by the truest principles of the turf!"

The king of the hustlers shook his head, resolving to blot from his mind the thought that had come to him like an inspiration from on high. Never would he violate the trust that had been imposed on him! Never would he lay himself open to being barred for life from the field in which all men knew him! His conscience was clean and should remain so!

And yet the inner voice persisted, reminding him again of the magic love potion that was brewed by a Jinni in behalf of the Vizier's stricken daughter.

Then he thought of "Sunshine Davy," the medicine man of the bush tracks who had died at Juarez leaving behind him a formula that possibly no one knew save the Information Kid, who had befriended the outcast in the latter's last moments. Late that night the young hustler went to old Doc Commerford, and requested the privilege of being left alone a few minutes in the veterinarian's laboratory.

"Now, see here," said Doc.

The Information Kid leveled a finger.

"I've protected you in many a scrape," he reminded. "Now, you go out on the porch and smoke a cigar. What you don't know wont hurt you."

STILL later, in the privacy of his own Scheep room, the gray-eyed servant of Allah sat cross-legged on his cot until far into the night, compounding like some ancient chemist the dangerous "food of the gods." Heroin for the brain . . . strychnine for the heart . . . caffeine for the nerves . . . and then one exquisitely measured drop—and a still smaller—of nitro, the explosive power of which can blast a city or merely set the delicate mechanism of the human body ticking, ticking, ticking!

Twice, the servant of Allah flung his precious pellets on the floor and crushed them under foot, and twice he remade them, torn between his conscience and his sentiment—his code of ethics and his chivalrous

love for a thoroughbred queen. Nor was his mind entirely made up when he fell asleep.

All this transpired on the eve of the Pennington Handicap with crowded Latonia eager for the morrow. Early the next morning, the Information Kid was down at the track getting an earful of the gossip that always precedes a big race. He had difficulty in dodging those who tramped at his heels whispering pleadingly: "What's doin', Kid? Slip us the low-down. What's the lay?"

The tipsters' sheets nearly all picked the Burton entry, Sunfire, with Tippetty Latch and Secret Silver as hot contenders. Concerning Lady Courageous the comment was uniform and traceable to the Information Kid: "Doesn't figure, but remember the Pennington tradition, and tab closely."

... "On best form would be good bet."

Gradually the race-track filled with eager patrons. The Kid went without lunch, and while the first race was being run, he made his way to the stables where the stage was being set for the approaching drama.

"Lad," said Sandy McKee, "you're not looking over well. What ails ye?"

"Oh, nothin'," answered the hustler. "How's the Lady look to you?"

The grizzled Scotchman did not reply for a moment. He studied the halter rope that his fingers had been nervously plaiting and unplaiting. "Tis the day," he answered, "the day! Ah, lad, it's the chance for both of us! The last chance for a gr-rand horse and an old fool."

He turned away, and in the stubborn squaring of his shoulders was the story of an old sport who had staked his all on the final turn of the wheel, and who realized now that the odds were all against him.

Once more, Allah, Lord of the Three Worlds (May His wisdom enlighten thee!) breathed upon the crystal sphere.

DOWN the shaded avenue of stalls came "Boots" Burton, manager of the Greenwood stables, and part owner of the great horse Sunfire. In the language of the track, Burton figured that the race was already "in." His black four-year-old had only to run up to past performances to surpass the form shown by any contender in the race. Any other trainer on the track would have had a kind word for poor Sandy McKee, standing there in front of his one-horse barn, but Boots was in a class by himself. Had he said a word, the Information Kid would have smashed him, a fact that Burton probably realized. But volumes can be contained in a single glance, and there was no mistaking the derisive contempt, the triumphant vindictiveness that blazed from Burton's eyes as he sauntered by. That look was a fatal mistake.

"Sandy," said the Information Kid, "I forgot to tell you, but there's some dispute over post positions, and you'd better go down to the secretary's office right away. I'll take care of the Lady until paddock time. Go ahead—you've just got time to make it."

McKee hurried off in quest of trouble that was purely imaginary, and the Information Kid opened the half-door of the stall. For a moment they looked at each other: the young servant of Allah and the "lil' ol' red stockings" of Sandy McKee's memory. The eyes of the youth were full of tenderness and understanding, those of the mare troubled and lusterless. She moved toward him as though seeking sympathy.

"I know," he petted. "This is Sandy's day, and you don't want to fail him. All you want is a fair chance, and there's nobody can give it to you but me. Listen, old girl, you're being called to the barrier for the last time. If you win, you and Sandy can go back to the farm, and Tucky Bells will keep the old colors going. If you



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lose, sweetheart, and that's the way the cards are stacked, then it's dust and ashes for Sandy, and God aint in His heaven. How would you like to dream, honey—just for twenty minutes—that this was the day you beat St. Ivan a head on the post? How would you like to see the grass turn emerald green, and the sky grow bright and blue, and all the world turn into a queen-dom that belonged to you alone? Shall we make a real race out of it, honey—a real race, just for the sake of Sandy, and Tucky Bells—and the hustler that loves you?"

The palm of his hand held a sugar-coated pellet. The servant of Allah proffered his gift.

"There it is, honey. Decide for your-self."

LADY COURAGEOUS lowered her dainty head. The delicate tactile hairs and nerves with which the soft pad of the muzzle is supplied experimented with the proffered morsel. Suddenly the velvet lips closed firmly over crunching teeth, and the Information Kid, holding her nostrils with cupped hands, pressed his cheek against the satin skin in a silent caress. Outside, a gong rang, summoning the Pennington entries to the saddling paddock. . . .

(Allah bless thee, Brother! What follows now must be told in confidence, and may thy tongue rot and thy soul shrivel if thou breakest faith with the teller. Understand, that neither man nor animal may exceed the potential capacity that is theirs by nature; but inhibitions may be temporarily removed; physical weaknesses fortified; and that which has once been held and lost, may be temporarily regained.)

No power on earth could give the gallant mother of Tucky Bells more speed than was hers by grace of lineage and royal nature. But the flame of desire could be rekindled, confidence restored, and the heated brain be made to send its imperial commands to the subjective flesh as of yore.

Lady Courageous was *dreaming* now! One by one the conscious fetters were falling free, and—behold—the gates of Valhalla were swinging wide! Up came the delicate head, velvet nostrils expanding, and lambent eyes lit by the glowing flame of the ruby. In the deep, gold bosom the heart began to pound with the rhythmic strength of youth; the nervous system tuned itself to the rush of renewed vitality; veins tingled under a delicious warmth, and ambition was reborn on the fluttering pinions of Desire.

Each succeeding minute, the world grew fairer, the dream more golden. In imagination she was young again, defending the honor of Sandy McKee. Memory, the guiding faculty of a horse, brought back every detail of the great day when she went to the post to battle against odds for the sovereignty of the turf. She visioned again the great St. Ivan, most formidable of her foes, plunging under chains, as they led him past his rivals in the paddock. She had been unafraid then; she was unafraid now. Trim legs trembled under the red bandages, the velvet flanks grew hot and moist, the shapely ears were flexed to catch the call to post, and in the fervent eyes—windows to the equine soul—the high lights now were dancing. *Lady Courageous was ready for the question!*

The Information Kid had watched with awed eyes the process of transformation. He had ventured into forbidden ground, had dared like Prometheus to filch fire from the gods, not for himself, but for one he loved; and now he was going through with it blindly, not knowing whether Heaven would condone the act, or Allah, Light of the World, punish him for his temerity.

TO old Sandy McKee, nervously administering to his pet in the paddock, and to little Bubbles, frantic with excitement, the

excited appearance of Lady Courageous meant merely that the Pennington tradition had come true. By some mysterious means, that neither troubled to question, the mother of Tucky Bells had divined that this was *the day!*

"Lad, what did I tell you?" demanded the Scotchman. "Don't tell me that horses don't *know!* Easy, you lil' ol' red stockings! Take it easy, Lady."

And little Bubbles spoke up, the china white showing large in his eyes. "'Fore Gawd, Boss—she's as full o' run as a hydrant. How 'bout goin' out in front, Boss—and tryin' to steal it?"

The Information Kid whispered fiercely: "No, you don't! Use them little blue arms today. Hold her out of it for a mile, if it takes all the strength you've got. Burton's got two horses in there: North Town and Sunfire, and he's shooting with *both*. North Town's going out to set the pace, and believe me, it will be a sizzler. He'll be ten lengths to the good at the three-quarter pole, but don't you get excited. Burton thinks the horse might last it out, but that's where he and I differ. You lay back alongside of Sunfire. Put her nose right at his shoulder, and hold it there until you hit the last turn. The instant you're straightened out, make your move, and don't make it until then or I'll bust every bone in your body."

The tiny negro hitched at his belt line, and grinned nervously.

"Yassuh, Marse Kid, reckon I gets you. Us sticks wif 'at Sunfire haws like tar to a blanket till we hits the head o' the stretch. Then, one way or another, us is goin' *part company!*"

"Yea, bo!" quavered the young king of the hustlers. "There's the bell! Hop to it, Bubbles. You ride and I'll root, and may the King of the World look down upon a winner!"

The parade started, North Town leading the way, Sunfire in fourth position, and Lady Courageous ninth in line. A gallant picture, well worthy of the applause evoked from grandstand and lawn. Rapid River, Fuselage, Colonel Tom—all had their admirers, but it remained for Lady Courageous, tiptoeing daintily in the sunshine, her satin coat creamed with lather, to attract the attention of the Judges.

"Hello," said the associate, "what's McKee done to his mare? Why, that horse is—"

Old Judge McAllister, presiding official, silenced his confrère with an uplifted hand. Here was a man who knew not alone the story of the Penningtons, but that of Sandy McKee and Lady Courageous. What more he knew or guessed he kept to himself. The mother of Tucky Bells, head erect and quivering in every golden limb, moved gracefully onward in her final response to the colors. Old Judge McAllister removed his hat reverently.

"A Pennington horse on Pennington Day," he reminded. "You've merely forgotten the tradition, Sam."

"Tradition, hell!" protested the associate. "That mare is—"

"Now, now," said Judge McAllister mildly, "my eyesight is as good as yours, and I see only a thoroughbred—a queen of the turf, suh—the bravest I have ever known."

A STRANGE calmness had come over Sandy McKee. The silver-haired Scotchman had regained his confidence. His wrinkled hands gripped the top railing; he stood erect and silent in the front rank of spectators, and his mild blue eyes were conscious of but one patch of color in the whole kaleidoscopic scene: the faded cerise and green blouse worn by Bubbles Jackson.

It was different with the Information Kid, whose nerves were taut to the point of

snapping and whose keen gray eyes took in every detail of the drama. Such moments were the high points in his life.

The hustler took another look at the betting ring, and saw by the totalizer board that the Burton entry was being supported now from outside sources. New York and Chicago pool-rooms had accepted more money on the Greenwood Stable than was deemed safe, and now they were wiring it into the track, dumping thousands of dollars into the pot. The Information Kid had seen enough of that angle. It was quite evident that the smartest operators in the country figured that Burton had the logical winner. He left the ring and hurried down the track where he could get a clear view of the start.

Marse Cassidy was lining them up. "Now, Tommy, you knew better than that! Once more, and I'll send you fishing for a week. That's better. Don't get tied in, Miller. Come back here where you belong."

Then the pleadings of anxious youngsters and the calm responses:

"Can I come over, Mr. Cassidy?"

"Yes, if Miller comes along with you."

"Wait a minute, Mr. Cassidy. This horse is backin' up. My horse is—"

"I know, my boy. I'll wait for you. Look out, you kid on Number 5. You'll get killed. He can't kick you if you're in close. Move in close! Bill, what's that mare on the outside? Who? Well, if she's a lady, I'm the Prince of Wales! All right, Bill, let her have her own way. Don't get hurt. Spread out, boys, and try it again. Easy now, come up slow. Pull up, Willie. . . . Hold it, Miller. . . . There's your opening, Number 5. Get in there! Quiet 'em down, boys. . . . quiet. . . . quiet. . . . e-a-s-y. Come on!"

BELLS rang, the barrier flashed, and they were off in a bursting wall of color. The crowd roared. . . . forty thousand people stood on tiptoes. . . . and here they came: a fighting mass of excited boys and foaming horseflesh, thundering past the stands in the all-important battle for position. Desperate youngsters, seeking to obey orders, literally took their lives in their hands, hooked boots with their opponents and fought it out when it looked as if a spill was inevitable.

Early speed was not to be denied. The Information Kid had gauged it accurately. North Town, with Johnny McCue in the saddle, went to the front with a rush, took the rail at the first turn, and under constant urging increased his lead. Back of him came Rapid River and Secret Silver, racing neck and neck and determined to keep in touch with the pace-setter. The others were laying off, Sunfire in fourth position and Lady Courageous a half-length back and on the outside.

Sunfire, the black pride of the Greenwood Stables, was being rated intelligently by the imperturbable Tommy Fenton, nicknamed the "Iceman" because of his cool, precise handling of a horse. No boy on the track had yet made him lose his head.

Bubbles, too, had recovered from his nervousness. Instinct had now come to the surface, and the "tar baby from Mississipp" had become a part of his horse. Scrawny blue arms were curved against the pull of Lady Courageous, but there was no choking. His arms gave as though they were set on springs, a steady tension so perfectly adjusted that not a drop of reserve power escaped.

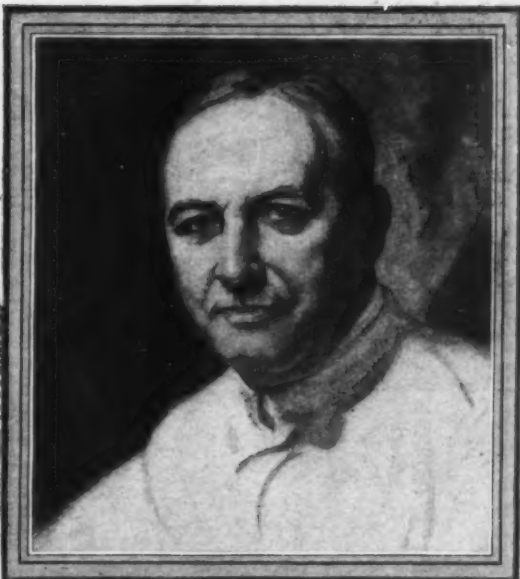
Down the long back stretch swept the blur of colors, the great crowd breathless, and fame and fortune wavering in the balance. North Town was resolutely blazing the way, on top now by eight lengths. He increased the lead.

A tumult went up from the grandstand: "They'll never catch him! Go on, you North Town! Look at that runnin' fool!"

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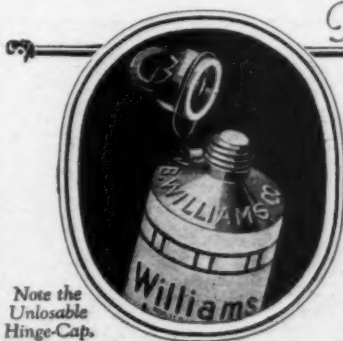
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Kotex Regular: 65c per dozen
Kotex-Super: 90c per dozen

Why, he'll walk in! Nothin' to it, boys, it's a one horse race!"

And it really looked that way. The terrific pace, set by that flying leader and so well sustained, was a shock to almost every handicapper on the track. They realized now that Boots Burton had fooled everybody. Great as Sunfire was, the black-coated four-year-old was in there merely as a decoy to draw the fire of his opponents. And while attention was thus focused on the "threat" horse held in reserve; while every dangerous contender was being held back, waiting for Sunfire to make his move, the fleet-footed North Town, lightly weighted and fit for the effort of his life, was being desperately ridden under instructions to "steal" the race.

Burton had figured the race shrewdly and it was being run so far as he desired. At the three-quarter pole, Secret Silver gave up the struggle and fell back beaten. Another furlong, and Rapid River cracked under the pace. At this point, Colonel Matt and Miss Magic forged out of the ruck and into contention for the first time but neither possessed sufficient class to wrest second and third place from Sunfire and Lady Courageous.

IT is time now that you give a thought to what was going on in the dream-drugged mind of Sandy McKee's "lil' ol' red stockings." All that she had ever had of fervor and courage and equine ambition was hers again. Ancient fires had been rekindled, and in her blonde bosom pounded the purple blood of a thousand years of purest ancestry. This was the supreme moment of her life—the crowning combat—and with all the gallantry in her nature she responded to the challenge.

For almost a mile she had been held, shoulder to stirrup, against the fleeting black shadow of a single opponent, until every equine nerve and fibre in her being clamored for the right to move up eye to eye, and empty her heart in the cause of Sandy McKee. Instinct told her she could and would beat this rival whose stride she had measured from the flash of the lifting barrier. She knew nothing yet of the flying North Town, ten heart-breaking lengths in the lead, and even now turning into the stretch for the long run home. Nor could she hear the roar of the crowd, heralding the pace-setter, and the anguished cry of the Information Kid: "For God's sake, Bubbles, come on with her! . . . Shake that dummy off, an' come on! Aw, Light o' the World, give her a chance!"

And it may have been that Allah, the All Wise, the All Powerful, condescended to hearken to a hustler's plea. For little "Bubbles" Jackson at that precise moment realized that the tiring North Town was still strong enough to last it out. The real race was not at his side but up in front. He had two horses to beat, and one was fresh, and the other lightly weighted and as yet unchallenged!

Down went the little black head, and suddenly Lady Courageous felt the magnetic urge of her rider—heard the call of his voice—quick and desperate. Instantly there was a lengthening flash of red bandages. The boy on Sunfire saw it, and made his own move immediately. The powerful black horse began his delayed drive. Quick as he was to respond to the will of his rider, a little bay mare with her ears flattened and her eyes rolled back in their sockets, had already closed on him, Lady Courageous had taken Sunfire "by the head," and the struggle was on!

Down they came, bridle to bridle, and nose to nose! The vast crowd stood up, thrilled by what appeared to be a desperate duel for second place honors.

Pressed against a railing, close by the judges' stand, a grizzled Scotchman viewed the scene with straining eyes, and cried out

again, as he had done on an afternoon three years before: "There she comes! There's my lil' ol' red stockings! Ah, lads, she's a-comin' now!"

BUT it remained for the Information Kid, who alone knew the full extent of the drama, to experience in the space of fifteen seconds the whole gamut of human emotion. The young hustler had found a vantage spot on top of the paddock shed, and nothing had escaped his eyes or his imagination. He was the first to see Sun-fire falter in his stride and Lady Courageous shake herself free.

"Got him!" he yelled. "She's got him! C'mon, sweetheart! North Town's licked, too! C'mon! C'mon! C'mon!"

The boy on the leading horse looked back. Then he sat down to ride for all that was in him. A bay whirlwind was at his heels—a bandaged queen of the turf that had come from nowhere, and *such* a queen!

A sixteenth out, it was still inconceivable to the crowd, but the tension grew, for men remembered the tradition of a Pennington horse on Pennington Day. A hush . . . a rising murmur . . . and then pandemonium!

The mother of Tucky Bells, having vanquished Sunfire, had now seen the horse in front, and great as had been her effort before, she now responded to the supreme call of her blood. Ah, well for her, that the young servant of Allah had measured out so carefully the dangerous "food of the gods." No help could have been better timed or more desperately needed.

That final hundred yards, from paddock to wire, with two thoroughbreds bumping desperately onward and the crowd gone crazy, was the culminating burst of glory in a lady's dream. It was the comeback of Lady Courageous!

"Pennington!" they shrieked. "Lord Valor! True Blue!" They called upon the old strain of Kentucky blood, roared it to Heaven! And the tradition held! The little mare *nailed* North Town forty jumps from the wire, held him fair and true for a heart-breaking interval, and in the last lunge for the wire, beat him by two crimson nostrils and the grace of God!

Then it was all over, save for the crowning picture that held the assemblage spell-bound: the vision of old Sandy McKee, safe in the port of his dreams, and hugging his flower-laden sweetheart as she stood trembling in the winner's circle, eyes staring off into the blue as though watching the portals of Valhalla slowly closing upon her dream. *Ave atque Vale, Regina!*

The cheering continued, a prolonged ovation to man and horse. Then McKee led his lil' ol' red stockings away, the crowd scampered back to the betting ring, and there remained by the white-washed paddock railing, only a youth with troubled gray eyes, who bit his lips, plunged his hands deep into empty pockets, and stared skyward as though pleading for the understanding of Allah, Lord of the Three Worlds!

"Common Ground"

They all met on it under extraordinary circumstances a few days before Christmas. The whole city was going to the dogs, the reformers said, and the grafters said: "Let it go." Then something happened. Just what is told in his next story, by

GERALD BEAUMONT

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*"And on the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfection of her face."
—Tennyson.*

THOUGH poets and authors in their praise of woman's beauty describe her luxuriant hair, soulful eyes, classic features or perfect mouth, all these lose their loveliness if her complexion is dull or lifeless.

A clear, satin-like skin creates a daintiness of appearance which heightens beauty of feature and is in itself woman's chief charm. Many women fail to possess this charm because they do not know how to care for the skin.

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No heavy perfume is required to conceal inferior quality. Buy a cake from your druggist or toilet goods dealer, and bathe your face with it tonight. Note how readily it lathers, how gently but thoroughly it cleanses the pores, how easily it rinses, how soft, velvety and refreshed it leaves your skin.

But don't let your treatment be too harsh! Many a woman ruins her beauty at the start by scrubbing her face with a rough cloth and hot water, when she should use lukewarm water and a soft cloth—or better still—her fingertips. The rinsings should be thorough, and the skin dried carefully by patting lightly with a soft towel.

Where blemishes are already present, apply a little Resinol Ointment and see how quickly it clears them away. This soothing, healing ointment is also unexcelled for the relief of itching, burning skin troubles, boils, chafings, scratches, etc. Your druggist sells the Resinol products. No home should be without them.

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THE OLD

(Continued from

and he could do no more than hold fast to the prize he had won, and thank God for it.

He laid his cheek on her hair, burying his lips now and then in the silken wilderness, and she rested her cheek on his breast, hearing beneath her ear the great strong slow thump—thump—thump of his stout heart.

THE eyes of both of them mused upon the Father of Waters and the vast corridor of his march beneath the sky, whence the flooded colors flowed away into the night. They felt as small as atoms beside the artery of the river carrying its red blood through the huge flesh of the earth.

The heavens seemed to die before them. The pomp of every hue turned to a poverty of dusk.

But now the stars began to answer the roll-call of the evening parade. There was a planet where there had been nothing; a star, another, others, a multitude. The captains of the night were brighter than the soldier-stars, but the plan of the assembly was beyond imagining.

They could not hear the music of the worlds; yet their ears were stung like their skins by the gnats in dancing constellations and nebulo-chaotic whorls.

They could not hear the bugle-fanfare that mustered the stars, or the thunder of the planets hurled along the grooves of their orbits. They were not even afraid to sit and watch the universe revealed them by the withdrawn curtains of the daylight.

But when a mosquito circled them and sounded its tiny hunting-horn, they were afraid of it. Out of the silence came Odalea's least idyllic tone:

"Darn it! My foot's asleep! We'd better go or we'll be eaten alive."

Ben's muscles jumped as if a hand had wakened him from a deep dream. He understood that he was cramped and his rusty muscles complained as they relaxed to let their prisoner go. He rose without ease and lifted her. She was yowling with the torment as of ants swarming from knee to toe-tip, and she could not stand alone. She leaned on him as if she were a one-legged animal until she could kick the blood about its business in her foot again.

Then they went to the horses and found them desperate with the war against the gnats, hoofs pounding, manes and tails swishing, teeth nipping and skins shutting at far distant spots.

They were so impatient to be gone that they almost overturned the buggy before Ben could take his place beside Odalea. When they understood that they were homeward-bound they bolted with sheer happiness.

But Ben was in a humor for leisure and he forced them down to a restless trot. But at every slight relaxing of his pull, they were off again.

The high and dangerous road where all four of them had grazed death was dark and ominous with loneliness, a perfect lover's lane for a communion of rapture. But the horses would not walk, and Ben's heart was so filled with anger at the frustration of his mood, that he drove them into the niche, and forced them to a halt where they had met the first omnibus a few hours before. It seemed an æon ago, for since that time he had broken the gyves of silence, voiced his passion and won to his arms the wife of his desire.

Yet when, in this most fitting place for tenderness, he turned to recapture his captive, she was afraid of the very dark that befriends all lovers. She was amazed at her own surrender to this strange man who had overwhelmed her at the first charge. She



"I bought it without touching my savings!"

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The HOOVER

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*TO PROVE RUGS NEED BEATING: Turn over a corner of a rug; with the handle of an ordinary table-knife, or something of equal weight, give the under or warp side 15 to 25 sharp taps and watch the dirt dance out from the nap depths onto a piece of paper. Feel the destructive character of this grit. This is the dirt your present cleaning methods have missed, and that beating has dislodged. Correct use of The Hoover causes this embedded dirt to be vibrated to the surface by the rapid, gentle beating of the Hoover brush, as powerful suction lifts the rug from the floor and draws all the beaten-out, swept-up dirt into the dust-tight bag.



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The oldest and largest maker of electric cleaners
The Hoover is also made in Canada, at Hamilton, Ontario

HOME TOWN

page 54)

was sure that footpads and murderers lurked behind every tree. She recalled the two tramps they had passed and was sure that they had turned back to lay an ambush.

It is one of love's most bewildering foibles that it resents an opportunity too nearly perfect. Love wants adventure, peril, the need of haste, the charm of rashness and the hazard of discovery.

Perhaps Odalea was remembering, too, the other young men who had fetched her into this very alley of shadow. None of them had been so lowly as Ben. Yet she liked Ben best. For whole moments she loved him, but fitfully. She had drowsed contentedly in his embrace for an hour at the edge of the water.

Here, however, love suddenly became mere love-making, grew silly with an opposite silliness to the sublime folly of the earlier toying.

Gnattish thoughts swarmed and whined: thoughts of what her father and mother would say to her for staying out so late, of what her aunt Mrs. Budlong would say to her for going out at all, of what would be said of her by anybody they passed on the levee or on the street.

An entirely other heart seemed to have replaced the fond soft thing that had melted under her breast at twilight. The snob-heart of the Lails was back in her bosom. She said almost peevishly:

"Please don't, Ben. We must get home. Please!"

Ben was aghast. He held a changeling in his arms. He had lost his new-found Odalea and was once more aloof and unwelcome. He sighed:

"All right for you!"

He gave the horses their will. They set out joyously for home.

Chapter Fifteen

IF there was dismay in the houses of Lail and Budlong over their high-born daughter's escapade with the plumber, there was no less dismay in the house of the plumber over his astounding excursion with the daughter of the Lails.

Mrs. Budlong, who had dashed over to the Lail home the moment she heard of Odalea's insanity, had joined the parents in an inquest upon the girl. She marveled aloud:

"What on earth ails her? Has she gone out of her mind to go out with a common ordinary—oh, I can't say the awful word!"

It was not her conduct they deplored; it was her company. They would almost have preferred to see her go wrong with a man of what Mrs. Budlong called "social position," than to go right with a man of none.

In the home of Ben Webb, his mother and his brothers were wondering just how far the head of their fatherless household would go with the high-toned sweetheart he had suddenly acquired. It had delighted them at first to think of Ben as a beau all dressed up and gallivanting. Hitherto he had shown no interest in girls and had been so tired at night that he usually sat around the house, washed up but not dressed up, until he yawned himself off to bed.

Once in a while he had stayed downtown late, playing pool probably, but he had never been seen with a girl and had never mentioned the faintest interest in one. The bathtub invention had started a riot of gossip in the house, and there had been a tea-pot tempest of amusement in advance over the buggy-riding affair.

But now that it grew late and Ben was conspicuously missing from his chair, it crept over the family soul like a fog that if Ben was seriously in love with Odalea and de-



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cided to marry her, the financial problem of the Webbs was a problem indeed. There was just money enough from his earnings and the pittance that came in from the invested insurance fund and from Petunia's lessons to keep the taxes paid and furnish a minimum of food and clothes.

If Ben took a wife all his wages would be necessary to her. He would have to rent a house, unless he brought Odalea home to live; and the thought of that was appalling. The mother's heart began to swell with primeval hostility to a daughter-in-law. Automatically her soul resolved that Odalea was unworthy of her boy and would wreck his life. The Lails were a shiftless pack and would probably settle themselves on poor Ben.

WIDOW WEBB'S thoughts were reflected in her darning-needle, and her rocking-chair. In her lap was the basket of socks and stockings, a fairy purse that could never be emptied. Over it her needle went stabbing and returning as if it were riddling Odalea's heart. Under her, the rocking-chair seesawed at full speed, slowed down, stopped as she pondered, then raced again.

Petunia was in the parlor with Adna Pippett, who would sit in stupid silence for a long while twiddling his thumbs and his wits, then fiercely ask her to play something or sing something, only to break into vigorous gabble the moment she began.

Petunia had observed, as all musicians must, that nothing can waken the dumb to speech like the sound of the piano or a voice uplifted in song by request. Petunia was too shy to refuse to sing when urged to, and too meek to rebuke the unconscious boorism of those who seemed to try to talk her down. She would go on bravely for a few bars, then quietly break off and join the conversation.

Adna Pippett was a distant relative of Mrs. Budlong's, held at a still greater distance because of his humble occupation as a hewer of ice and drawer of soda-water at the drug-store. Adna boasted of being "pashnutly fond of music," but he liked it best perhaps because it overcame the inhibitions on his fluency in speech. Stand him behind the counter in his machine-gun nest of soda-pistols and flavor-faucets, and he could out-chatter half a dozen queens at once. But set him on a slippery horsehair sofa in front of one girl with her family in the offing of the back parlor—and his voice coughed and stuck like the air in an exhausted siphon.

Let some one start to play or sing, however, and words bubbled out of him! He could drown any piano or any singer in Carthage.

It was Adna who, having seen Odalea drive down Main Street in the buggy with Ben Webb, had hastened to telephone Mrs. Budlong the news that sent her over to the Lails.

ADNA had dropped in on Petunia to see how the Webbs were standing the earthquake. He found it hard to get himself started until he got Petunia started on a lyric; then he sauntered to the upright piano, leaned his elbow on its high top and reclining on the air, spoke with the glibness of a violin obligato:

"Well, what's the big idea about your brother Ben goin' buggy-ridin' with my cousin Odaly? You could 'a' knocked me over with a feather. Wasn't you surprised?"

"Not especially. Why?" said Petunia, forging her song and letting her hands fall silent.

"Why, you could 'a' knocked me over with a feather when I saw 'em drivin' by the store. Odalea has always been so up-pity and all up to now. But when I saw her joggin' along with Ben, you could 'a'—"

"Why shouldn't she go riding with my brother? Who's better than Ben?"

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"Oh, as to that, o' course! Yes—well—but—"

He realized that he was struggling along without his necessary accompaniment, and he urged:

"Go on and play somethin', wont you? I'm pashnutty fond of music. What was that you was startin' to sing? Go on, wont you? I'm pash—"

More from embarrassment than compliance Petunia repeated the prelude and lifted her voice. At once he was garrulous again:

"You see, the Lails are so snooty and Mrs. Budlong never forgave me for goin' behind the sody-counter; and now to have their own Odalea out ridin' with a—of course, Ben is the salt of the earth; but, after all, his business aint exactly what—"

"What?" said Petunia with menace.

"Oh, I don't know. But you should 'a' heard Mrs. Budlong snap at me when I told her. Sounded like she'd bit the transmitter right off the phone."

He laughed with the snicker of carbonated water scuttering into a glass until he recognized that Petunia was not only not singing but glaring.

"Go on, sing some more!" he pleaded.

But she walked away from the piano and sank into a chair. Adna dropped to the piano stool and whirled round and round on it till Petunia gasped:

"In heaven's name, sit still—you make me dizzy!"

Adna tried to put on the brakes by pressing his flying feet to the carpet, but at that moment the stool-top reached the end of its pivot and went skirling off, carrying Adna with it as if he were on the rings of Saturn. His feet shot up; his head smote from the ivories a discord like a gigantic "Ouch!" He sat hard on the pedals and ended up in chaos under the keyboard.

By the time the other Webbs reached the door and Petunia reached Adna, he had lost all sense of direction. As he rose hastily he drove his forehead against the ledge of the keyboard and went under again in a mixture of such pain, bewilderment and humiliation that his befuddled soul accused the piano of attacking him. When he was on his feet at last he turned and gave the imitation mahogany beast a furious kick in the shin of one of its legs.

The Webbs were only human and their sympathy could not quite cope with their sense of the ludicrous. Adna, with a lame foot, a battered skull, a bruised mid-region and an outraged dignity, was once more incoherent. Sputtering and spitting, he made for the door and slammed his hat on his head. He slammed it off again with a yowl and stumbled out into the night.

When the Webbs had tired of laughing and Guido had affixed the stool-top to the spike, he said to Petunia:

"Why do you ever sing for such people, Toony? It's like a nightingale wasting her skill on a bunch of hop-toads."

"There's nobody else to waste it on," she sighed, "and even they wont listen."

"That's because your art is too fine for them. It takes a master to appreciate a master. In the big cities they'd rave over you."

"That's likely!" she pouted. "If I can't hold the attention of a villager, I'd do well in a big town, wouldn't I?"

"You bet you would. What did they think of Shakespeare in Stratford? Even when he came back from writing plays for the Queen, they couldn't believe he was any good. Just you wait till you get to New York."

"I'll wait, all right. Now that Ben has fallen in love, we'll all stick right here. Not that he hasn't a right to a little fun. Heaven knows he works hard enough. But I could have scratched Adna Pippett's eyes out for insinuating that Odalea Lail was too good for Ben. The idea!"

B-n's mother sniffed at this:

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"And after him spending all that time
and money fixing up her old bathtub! She's
not half good enough for him, if the truth
was told."

They drifted back to the sitting-room
and took up their various tasks: Guido his
writing, Petunia the love-story she was
reading, and Mrs. Webb her mending.

Nelson Junior paced the floor with a
Shakespeare in hand, memorizing his next
Friday afternoon oration. He had made
such a triumph with his impersonation of
Spartacus haranguing the gladiators, that
now he was studying the speech in which
the lean and hungry *Cassius* endeavors to
persuade the ambiguous *Brutus* that it is
his patriotic duty to make one of a party
of gentlemen who were planning to stick
their knives into their friend *Cæsar*.

His incessant repetition of the peroration
filled the air with the word "devil." It
suited the mood of the children, tortured
between their eagerness for Ben's happiness
and anxiety for their own futures.

In Mrs. Webb's mind there was a miser-
able feeling that she could endure the eternal
devil in her home as easily as a Lail.

MEANTIME Ben's new savagery was
enough to befuddle even horses, and
they were filled with terror of their whim-
sical driver-god, who dragged them down
when they would gallop, and whipped them
when they would walk.

They went wild with fear and tried to
run away from him, to frighten him with
angry snorts, bucking, rearing and lashing
out. But his laughter dogged their heels.

This was the fearless Ben that Odalea
loved, and her affection came back per-
versely. Since it would be unwise and un-
safe to exchange caresses now, caresses be-
came desirable. Wary of clutching her hat,
she took it off and studied Ben and the
picture he made in the soft red radiance
of the vast moon just now lifting its enor-
mous lamp above the horizon, and bringing
back a ghostly sunset. Along a level road
along the river encarnadined anew, the
horses bounded with the look of antelopes,
only for the rippling pennants of their
manes.

The wind made a mane of her own dis-
ordered hair and swept it across her eyes
and his face till she gathered it back so that
she might watch him better. She saw in
his set jaw such disdain of himself and his
rebuked love and of the danger he invited,
that her heart went back to him. Her
hands returned to his sleeve and admired
the power at work within it.

At length she laid her cheek against his
shoulder and stared up at him till she com-
pelled his gaze away from the road. He
glanced at her at last and was so surprised
at that return of tenderness that he looked
away. Then he must glance down again to
make sure of what he thought he had seen.
On the third glance, he bent and kissed her
fiercely for an instant. That was the best
kiss of all, for it was brief and dangerous.

And then he was so comforted that he

foiled himself again, for he checked the
horses and made them walk, and taking the
lines in one hand, pushed his other arm
back of her to embrace her. To his ig-
norant amazement, she moved away again,
and he shook his head with the old male
stupidity: there's no understanding women.
No wonder, when men search for distant
complex mysteries and overlook the simple
explanations at hand.

Soon they were at the covered bridge
again. It was pitch-black midnight within
and only the blue door of moonlight at
the other end guided the horses. Their
hoofs were loud once more and the fear of
assassins in the dark sent her close to Ben
again. He exacted long kisses from her
now, and she was afraid to cry out or even
speak lest she direct some thug to their
presence.

Out again into the brightening night and
the white-fenced road curling among the
sluiceways. And then the long, long bridge
where the horses must not trot. Through
the steel web of girders the wan moon
moved like a gray spider in a froth of
clouds. She was smaller now and climbing
fast, and her light turned the broad river
into streaming silver.

There were other buggies on the bridge,
and foot-passengers, and there was no
chance for making love. Ben spoke again of
how the dam would look like a Chinese wall
across the stream, and of how the turbines
would whirl and spin power in threads a
hundred miles long; and of how rich he
would be and how rich he could make her.

IF she had not rebuffed him far back on
the road, he would have asked her to
marry him then. Now there was no oppor-
tunity for such a question with wraiths of
strangers walking by and the clatter of the
horses of other couples breaking up the
rhythm of his own.

It was as well, perhaps, for his talk of
the dam as a certain thing revived her in-
herited dreams of the family wealth when
those lots were sold. If the dam were built,
then the land-poor Lails would be the Lails
of many acres. Her father could buy for
her the things she must otherwise look to a
husband for. She could travel and find
more handsome romance at a distance. So
the bridge was crossed with Ben delivering
a lecture on prospects like a dealer in real
estate, to an audience of one that heard
nothing he said.

Down the levee and up the steep hill,
and they were on Main Street with its lights,
its loafers and its stores asleep. Then they
turned into a side-street and trotted through
tunnels of green branches interlocked over-
head and broken at the corners with flares
of blinding arc-lights. Most of the houses
were dark, but on many of the porches the
sound of rocking-chairs and softly thudding
feet was heard, or the creak of hammocks
and the hum of voices. Along the side-
walks couples sauntered in the anonymity
of gloom.

This was no place for making love, and

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"The Inquiring Reporter"

when they spoke at all they spoke as if they feared to waken some one, or to appraise some one awake and watching of their own identities.

And so they reached her house with nothing agreed on except that they had gone a long way, seen beautiful scenery, and shared a little forbidden mischief. Ben made a desperate resolve to kiss her good-night and pledge her to another ride soon, but just as the horses came to a standstill in front of the iron black boy at the curb, a voice from the Lail porch came out querulously:

"That you, Odalea? Your aunt's here!"

That meant Mrs. Budlong, and Ben could not imagine a declaration of love in her toplofty presence. Odalea was confronted with the knowledge of the cross-examination awaiting her, and she was so angry at the battle in front of her that she gave Ben the impression that she was angry at him.

He lifted his hat in his best manner and shook hands as formally as if Odalea were the Mayor, and he a visiting Congressman.

Chapter Sixteen

HE was calling himself a fool all the way back to the livery stable, and there old man Wiley tried to be funny and inquired: "What luck, Ben? Would she listen to reason?"

Ben told him where to go.

Wiley hastily changed his tone:

"Don't you want I should drive you home? No trouble at all?"

"I'd rather walk," said Ben.

"Suit yourself," laughed Wiley. "Been stretchin' your arms so much you feel like stretchin' your legs, I s'pose."

Ben would have turned back to knock him down, but the old fool was too frail for such discipline. So he walked on, fuming.

The sight of his home softened his heart. The moonlight was fond upon the dim old roof. The light in the hall was waiting for him, and he knew that he would find within nothing but welcome and affection as comfortable and kindly as old slippers.

He found his mother asleep in her chair by the table, with her hands folded in the workbasket in her lap. That workbasket was always overflowing with socks and stockings folded in like rounded fruits.

She pretended not to have been asleep when he kissed her on the forehead, and her hands went to her needles guiltily like night-watchmen caught napping.

"Have a nice time?" she asked.

"Fine!" he lied.

"You'll find some cookies and apples on the dining-room table, and there's milk in the ice-box," she suggested. But he shook his head. He was tired out body and soul, and wanted to be asleep. He helped her put out the lights and took her up the stairs in the hollow of his arm. His arm remarked the difference between her waist and Odalea's, but his heart resented the lithe youth of the girl and the harsh fate that had made his mother ancient without love. If anybody had a right to the benefits of that future wealth he had bragged so much about, it was his mother. If there were silks to be bought, let her wear them. If there were pleasure-trips and pleasure-boats to be enjoyed, let her enjoy them.

The night was so warm that the bedroom doors upstairs were left ajar. They were still all children. As he escorted the queen of his heart to her room, they caught a glimpse of Petunia asleep. She was prettier than Odalea, in just the wealth of her hair dispersed about her pillow. Her silence was eloquent of the songs hushed in her linnet's throat. That one bare arm hanging out with the palm of her hand upturned suggested a beggar's appeal for help.

If he had money coming in, let it take



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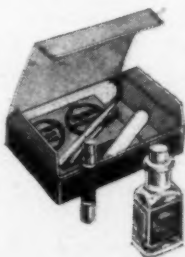
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It should be a lovely, well-groomed hand—one he will always be proud to hold—a hand bejeweled with the glowing, shell-pink nails that good taste and Fashion demand.

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Try GLAZO Cuticle Massage Cream

It shapes the cuticle and keeps it even and healthy

The Glazo Co., 29 Blair Ave., Cincinnati, O.

his sister forth to the glory that waited for her. Her life was brief, too; and he must not delay till her bloom was gone. He must get her away at once to the city where some teacher would open the door to fame.

BEN kissed his mother good-night and went down the hall. He looked in at his youngest brother Nelse, who lay in his usual contortion of violent slumber. As usual he had kicked the covers to the floor, and as often Ben went in and covered him up and tucked him in with a motherly smile. That boy must not be denied his chances either.

From the next door the light streamed. Guido was up and writing hard at something. He had undressed in part and was still holding one eye open with his fingers while the other slept. He did not even know that Ben stood and pondered him with humble admiration from the hall. That genius must go to college if money had to be borrowed and another mortgage placed on the homestead, which had put on mortgages and paid them off three times already, supporting its tenants by its own efforts.

The last room was Ben's. He crept into it, worn out with such fatigue and wonder as the horses must have felt when they went again to their stalls. Like them, he had enjoyed a day of festival and of thrills, a feast, and a triumph: and like them he had been whipped and scorned and abandoned. His ambition for success took on now the hue of revenge—against whom or what he was not sure. He wanted to take care of his own for their own dear sakes, but he wanted also to rise so high that certain people would have to look up at him and would feel that they were honored by his lofty acquaintance.

Curiously, Mrs. Budlong was eminent in his plans. That old snooty stuck-up frump annoyed him, filled him with a lust for success. If only he could get so rich and famous that she would beg him to come to a party at her house, and he could answer, "I'm sorry, but I got so many engagements, I can't quite make it!"

There was ecstasy in the mere imagination. Strange to say, Mrs. Budlong was one of the most inspiring figures in Carthage. Nobody liked her and she really liked nobody, yet she kept the lazy inhabitants squirming with a rancorous eagerness for success. Men worked overtime at their offices to enable their wives to shine at Mrs. Budlong's parties. Men who pretended to despise social elegance and to laugh at climbers, would feel the oddest pride in finding their names and their wives' names on the list of the "Messers and Mesdames" who were among those at one of Mrs. Budlong's exclusive functions.

Ben could still remember that the little anarchy he was as a boy had stood up a trifle straighter and scrubbed his neck a little farther back and higher when he made ready to go to the wedding at Mrs. Budlong's. His warlike nature had led him into disgrace and his family had never been invited again, but now that he was grown up, he found a canker still alive and gnawing in his heart:

To be invited back to Mrs. Budlong's!

Even his love for Odalea had changed somewhat. It was still honey, but fermented with a tang of bitterness. He was

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determined to win her as a captor rather than a suppliant. He thought of her as an early Roman might have desired the Sabine woman he had selected for his particular prize. He would dazzle her and carry her off.

All this was to come to him with his triumph. The triumph was still to seek. How was he to overcome all the obstacles to his success? The town of Carthage offered no prospect of wealth, little more than a chance to earn a fair living and enjoy it in the calm sweetness of a small town, lodged in a realm of beauty.

His field of victory was far from here. But how was he to leave the shop? He had some money in the bank; his share in the business was worth something. But there was not nearly enough to send him away and care for his family, to say nothing of taking them with him. He longed for a schooling in science. He thirsted after the learning in mechanics and electricity, dynamics, all the scholarship of a matter-of-fact mind. He was sure that if he could have a few years at some big technological institution, he could make a great fame for himself and with the fame a fortune. If only he could go to Chicago, to St. Louis, or New York, and enter a huge machine shop, he could forge ahead. A steel-mill or a locomotive-works was to him what a cathedral is to a parish priest. But to leave his mother and the brothers and the sister who were his adopted children was simply incomprehensible. It would be such a cruelty of selfishness that he was not even tempted.

He was resolved to set Petunia and Guido and Nelson on the highway to grandeurs, at any cost. But he would stay at home with his mother. If Odalea's people continued poor and grew poorer, perhaps she would come down so far in the world that she would count it an honor to be uplifted into Ben's life. But otherwise, she must be surrendered. And he surrendered her. With a breaking heart, he thanked God that he had not asked her to marry him. What if she had said yes? It would have been the most ruinous triumph ever a man had. No, he was doomed to stick in the shop.

He could no more fly than a tree can, of its own volition. With the grandeur of a tulip tree, he gripped the soil and made ready to dig his roots deeper and deeper into the dark, so that he might send the bright flowers higher and higher. He would not know the sky and the upper glory, but down there in the black he could solace himself with the thought that the ones he loved were blooming aloft, and that he had some honor in them.

SO this man Ben, this dejected moiler in grease and clamor, lay back in his bed like a beaten, broken craven and did not know his own grandeur.

He was not even granted the solace of repose. He could not sleep, but threshed about, cursing himself, denouncing his stupidity, his selfishness, the greedy idiocy of fixing his heart on Odalea Lail. Why did he have to go and fall in love at all? What right had he to think of any such foolishness? Love was worse than booze. He might as well join the sorry crowd that gathered about the speak-easies and the ghastly dives and got drunk every night.

And those poor souls, whose tormenting baffled hopes and whose ill-made or ill-assembled machines demand the fierce anodynes of drink and drug—they have even less reward than the sober fellow-martyrs. They have even less of self-approval. They take their pay in remorse, nausea, ugly pain and self-contempt.

It was Ben's luck to escape that cross at least. But he had enough to bear, and he tried in vain to compel himself to sleep, for the help of a brief let-up in his misery.

Don't envy Beauty —use Pompeian

HER whole evening had been a success. Everyone had wanted to dance with her—and it was wonderful to hear so many flattering things.

Perhaps all those dull times she used to know were gone forever! It was amazing to find out how completely a girl could change her appearance by "knowing what to do." She had Madame Jeannette to thank—for it certainly made a difference, now that she knew how to care for her skin.

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RULES

1. Only one title from one person.
2. Ten words or less for the title.
3. Write title on one sheet of paper. Below title write only your name and full address.
4. Coupon and coin for panel can be sent along with your title.
5. Contest closes Nov. 30, 1925, but get your title in early.
6. In the event of a tie for any prize offered, a prize identical with that tied for will be awarded to each tying contestant.
7. Prizes paid Dec. 15, 1925. Winners announced Jan. 9, Saturday Evening Post.

Pompeian Bloom
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Note. If you plan to get panel anyhow, you can send for it first and study it in full size and colors. Then send in your title. However, no one is required to get a panel to enter contest.

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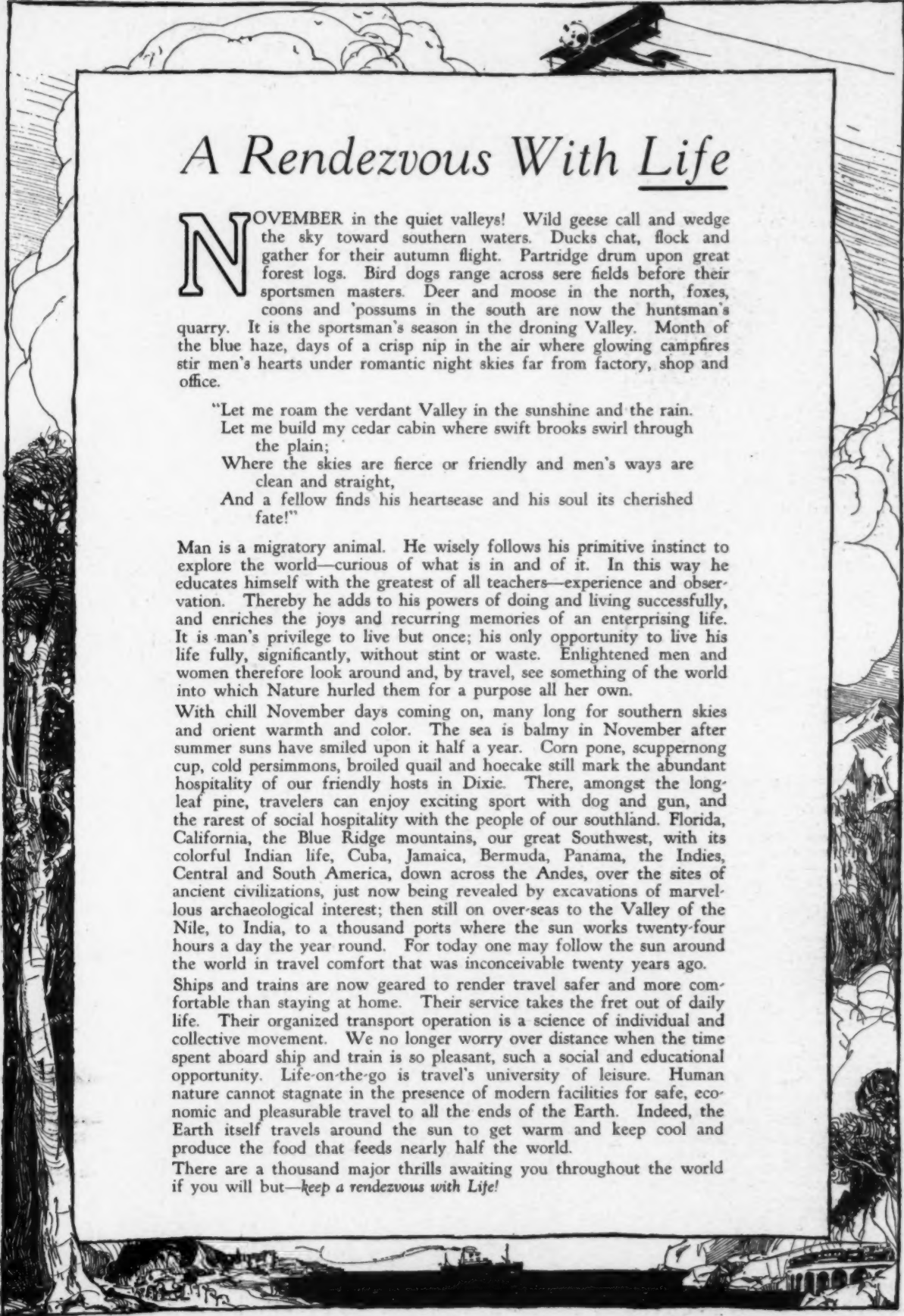
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A Rendezvous With Life

NOVEMBER in the quiet valleys! Wild geese call and wedge the sky toward southern waters. Ducks chat, flock and gather for their autumn flight. Partridge drum upon great forest logs. Bird dogs range across sere fields before their sportsmen masters. Deer and moose in the north, foxes, coons and 'possums in the south are now the huntsman's quarry. It is the sportsman's season in the droning Valley. Month of the blue haze, days of a crisp nip in the air where glowing campfires stir men's hearts under romantic night skies far from factory, shop and office.

"Let me roam the verdant Valley in the sunshine and the rain.
Let me build my cedar cabin where swift brooks swirl through the plain;
Where the skies are fierce or friendly and men's ways are clean and straight,
And a fellow finds his heartsease and his soul its cherished fate!"

Man is a migratory animal. He wisely follows his primitive instinct to explore the world—curious of what is in and of it. In this way he educates himself with the greatest of all teachers—experience and observation. Thereby he adds to his powers of doing and living successfully, and enriches the joys and recurring memories of an enterprising life. It is man's privilege to live but once; his only opportunity to live his life fully, significantly, without stint or waste. Enlightened men and women therefore look around and, by travel, see something of the world into which Nature hurled them for a purpose all her own.

With chill November days coming on, many long for southern skies and orient warmth and color. The sea is balmy in November after summer suns have smiled upon it half a year. Corn pone, scuppernong cup, cold persimmons, broiled quail and hoeecake still mark the abundant hospitality of our friendly hosts in Dixie. There, amongst the long-leaf pine, travelers can enjoy exciting sport with dog and gun, and the rarest of social hospitality with the people of our southland. Florida, California, the Blue Ridge mountains, our great Southwest, with its colorful Indian life, Cuba, Jamaica, Bermuda, Panama, the Indies, Central and South America, down across the Andes, over the sites of ancient civilizations, just now being revealed by excavations of marvelous archaeological interest; then still on over-seas to the Valley of the Nile, to India, to a thousand ports where the sun works twenty-four hours a day the year round. For today one may follow the sun around the world in travel comfort that was inconceivable twenty years ago.

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Suddenly he was cursing himself for another reason, the very antithesis of his earlier disgust. Why should he be wallowing here in hopelessness, when he had that brain of his to rely on?

He could not get out of Carthage, but his soul could fly as far as it would. He could send his inventions out to work for him in the remotest capitals. Old Hank Grubbage down at the depot had never been out of town, yet he sat at his telegraph ticker and sent messages everywhere.

All Ben had to do was to arise and invent something. His quick heater was a sample of what his old bean could turn out when it was stirred. His hopes of it had flown a little too high at first, and had been brought down by contact with reality. The patent fees, models and delays were making it an expense instead of a fortune just now. He had learned that his inspiration had occurred to other people before him. There were already numerous devices on the market that were doing fairly well the work his contraption promised to do a little better. He had found on investigation that salesmanship is the better part of invention. He had heard stories of how long it took to interest capital in anything new and how often ideas were stolen and sold outright or under a thin disguise.

The Webb quick heater would probably make its way. It might even bring in the riches he had dreamed of in the first fervor of inspiration. But that was uncertain. The only things certain were the delay and the difficulties. Still, there were other things to invent. There must be something the world was waiting for. He must get up and get at it at once.

He rose and pulled on his trousers and his coat, lighted a lamp and spread out paper before him. To find a pencil was the next problem, and of course the point was dull. But not half so dull as his brain! He could sharpen his pencil, but his wits—something outside had to sharpen his wits.

In the other room Guido's big buzzing head was fast asleep on an unfinished sentence on a page largely crossed out. He had ink on his cheek, but his brain was dry. He had sought to do what Ben was attempting: to invent something with no more inspiration than a mania to invent something. Like a sore-beset author who wants to write, and has no plot and no characters and no impetus, Ben sat and gnawed the pencil nub, raked his hair with his fingers, made fatuous scratches on the paper, and stared out of the window with eyes so dull that he did not realize how subtly the moon had set and the dawn had kindled the east and filled the roomy sky with the full day.

He heard his mother trying to start a fire in the stove without waking the children. His wide eyes woke and he looked at his alarm clock just in time to leap to it and throttle its clamor.

And now he was ready to go to bed. He cursed the man that invented sleep. He glanced at the meaningless scrawls on the paper and crumpling it, threw it on the floor, growling half-aloud:

"Good Lord, I'm crazier than a coot. And that goes for love as much as work."

Chapter Seventeen

WHEN he reached the shop he was so glazed of eye and so somnambulistic, that his partner growled:

"Say, what kind of a bat you been on? Everbody says you went out buggy-ridin' with Odaly Lail. Did you just git in?"

"I told you to leave her name out of this shop, didn't I? Or did I?" Ben snapped with the fierceness of a wolverene.

"Sure you did. And I didn't mean to intrude on your private affairs."

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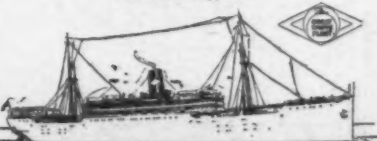
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To make sure that no lingering suspicion should attach itself to the thought of her in Jake's mind, he mentioned her name once more.

"As a matter of fact, I left Miss Lail at her house at a very early hour. I been up all night workin' on an invention."

"You have? That's great!"

Jake was like a frightened child trying to placate a threatening parent with a smile.

"Heard the news? The railroad is going to make this a division point, and build a pack of roundhouses and machine-shops. They're goin' to import a thousand men or more. It's a big op'toonity for us, I can tell you."

This heartened Ben amazingly. The stars had heard him and, since he could not leave the village for the city, had sent the city to the village. The big shops he had longed for were coming to his feet on a magic carpet. Perhaps Odalea would be sent to him in a magic palanquin or something.

IT was Jake's way to spoil everything pleasant on the rare occasions when he said anything pleasant to spoil.

"What's more, the railroad's goin' to bring its offices here, too. They're goin' to ship into town fifty or a hundred swell young fellers from the big cities, college men, and sons of capitalists, to learn the trade of railroadin'. This old burg will be livelier than Peoria before long."

Ben's anxious mind leaped to the full peril of this. Into the sleepy town where Odalea was stranded, an army of brilliant Easterners would march—fellows from Harvard and Yale and Columbia, with swell ways of talking and fancy clothes, and the latest dance steps.

They would be wicked, coming from the East and from the cities. And they would turn the heads of all the girls in Carthage. They would not make them wives, of course, but they would make them victims of evil wiles. The girls that resisted evil would not resist flattery and hifalutin ideas, and they would be spoiled for any use as wives or sweethearts of the fellows in town.

As Ben saw it, the town would be inundated with a mob of Ulie Budlongs. What would happen to Odalea, he dreaded to think of. One thing was sure, she would never look at anything as common as a machine-shop man. She would be the belle of the town. Even the Easterners would recognize her superior graces, and her beauty would set them to fighting over her.

But in that battle there would be no place for Ben Webb. He had no weapons and no strategy for such a scrimmage. And no heart, either.

He thought of Mrs. Budlong! What wouldn't she say to this? The old cat would be rolling in a ton of catnip dumped on her from the skies.

He paused to listen to a lathe against whose cutting surface Jake was holding a wooden spindle, that buzzed with an almost deafening rumble.

"Listen at that!" he yelled across Jake's shoulder. "That's old Mrs. Budlong purrin'!"

"What say?" said Jake, lifting the thing away.

"Nothin'!" Ben shouted into the unexpected silence.

As Jake turned to his work again, he howled:

"Never rains but it pours. Looks like the dam was goin' through. Yep, a new boom in real estate is comin' on. Last night a feller from out of town made a bid for one of old man Lail's lots. We might git paid for that job you done for 'em, after all. Stranger things have happened."

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LAFAYETTE, VOICI LES PETERS!

(Continued from page 62)

was asleep, Mr. Peters got up quietly and opened the window again. Never had fresh air seemed so grateful as that which swept in, revivifying Mr. Peters and giving him new courage. He might get a little sleep now after all. Hitting upon a position where his body would not be flung about so heavily, he began counting sheep.

The little Frenchman was up this time, and the window was shut again. It seemed as if, coincident with the shutting of the window, the heat was automatically turned on, for the compartment almost immediately became stifling. Mr. Peters said to himself: "Come on now. You are outnumbered. The majority want the window down. Be fair, Peters. Be fair. You'll be asleep in no time now."

But he wasn't asleep in no time. He was gradually dying of asphyxiation, and he knew it. His throat was contracting and his eyes were protruding. With a snarl, he bounded up and pulled the window open.

It would be needlessly grueling to recount the number of times that the Frenchmen shut the window and the number of times that Mr. Peters opened it. They were two to his one, and each of them had time to rest while the other was on duty. Mr. Peters was on his feet practically every other minute. The Frenchmen were on theirs only every five minutes each. It was simply a question of endurance, and even Mr. Peters' flaming rage could not keep him going after the first hour. He was literally exhausted and his hands were blistered from constant tugging at the window sash. His temples throbbed as he staggered back and forth between the bunk and his window. He realized that he was licked and that he must leave the field to the victors. So he drew on his shoes, tied his tie, and pulled his bag down from the rack. His buddies heard him open the bag and search through it for something. Then they heard him strike a match and saw a faint flicker for a second. Probably he couldn't find his ticket. Whatever it was, they decided that it wasn't important, for the next minute he was struggling with the lock on the door of the compartment, and, with a bang, was out in the corridor, where he spent the night.

THE evening papers in Marseilles love nothing better than what is known in America as a "human interest story." They outdo themselves in its handling. The following, then, is a literal translation of a story which gave Marseilles its best reading since the famous case of the local doctor who kept his cadavers in a closet:

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Locked in a railway-carriage, with windows and door completely closed, on the train which left the Gare de Lyons, Paris, at 18:25 last night, arriving at Marseilles at 10:15 this morning, two travelers were found by the guard, Paul Lavoissier, of 24 Rue Three-and-a-half-Sisters, absolutely suffocated dead. There were no signs of violence! There was there no weapon! Alas! But within the compartment one noticed a suffocating smoke, of which the explanation may be the stub of a small pastille found in a corner of the compartment by Cleaning Woman Marianne Bombard of 36a Rue Every-Thursdays. One thinks that for revenge of some sort this was lighted by a third traveler who has since left the compartment. He is disappeared! The mystery is monstrous!



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(Continued from page 41)

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"Should we answer either of those questions," one of the small monsters said, in a shrill little voice, as though a cricket were talking, "it would be the worse for you."

"Then, by all means, do not answer! Instead, do you tell me if knowledge and truth are to be found hereabouts, for it is of them that I go in search."

"How should we know? It was not in pursuit of these luxuries that we came hither, very unwillingly."

"Then, how does one get out of this place?"

Now they all twittered together, and they flitted around Kerin with small squeakings.

"One does not get out of this place."

Kerin did not cry pettishly, as Saraide would have done: "Good Lord!" Instead, he said: "Dear me!"

"Nor have we any wish to leave this place," said the small lizard-women. "These waters hold us here with the dark loveliness of doom; we have fallen into an abiding hatred of these waters; we may not leave them because of our fear. It is not possible for any man to imagine the cruelty of these waters. Therefore we dance above them; and all the while that we dance we think about warmth and food instead of about these waters."

"And have you no food here, nor any warmth, not even brimstone? For I remember that, up yonder in Poictesme, our priests were used to threaten—"

"We do not bother about priests any longer. But a sort of god provides our appointed food."

"Come, come, now, that is much better. For, as I was just saying to my wife, supper is a matter of vital importance, after a rather hard day of it— But who is this sort of god?"

"We do not know. We only know that he has nineteen names."

"My very dear little ladies," said Kerin, "your information appears so limited, and your brightness so entirely physical, that I now hesitate to ask if you know for what reason somebody is sounding that far-off gong which I can hear."

"That gong means, sir, that our appointed food is ready."

"Alas, my friends, but it is quite unbearable," declared Kerin, "that food should be upon that side of the dark water, and I, who have had rather a hard day of it, should be upon this side!"

"No, no!" they reassured him. "It is not unbearable, for we do not mind it in the least."

Then the squeaking little creatures all went away from Kerin, flitting and skimming and twinkling over broad waters which seemed repellently cold and very dreadfully deep. Nevertheless, Kerin, in his desperation,—now that no god answered his prayer, and even the *ignes fatui* had deserted him, and only a great hungering remained with Kerin in the darkness,—Kerin now arose and went as a diver speeds into these most unfriendly-looking waters.

THE result was astounding and rather painful: for, as Kerin thus discovered, these waters were not more than two feet in depth. He stood up a bit sheepishly, dripping wet and rubbing his head. Then Kerin waded onward in a broad shallow puddle about which there was no conceivable need to bother any god. Kerin thus came without any hindrance to dry land, and to a place where the shining concourse of lizard-women had already begun to nibble and tug and gulp. But Kerin, after having perceived the nature of their appointed food, and after having shivered, walked on beyond this place, toward the light he detected a little above him.

"For supper," he observed, "is a matter of vital importance; and it really is necessary to draw the line somewhere."

Now Kerin seemed in the dark to be mounting a flight of nineteen stairs. He came thus into a vast gray corridor, inset upon the left side with nineteen alcoves: each alcove was full of books, and beside each alcove stood a lighted, very large candle as thick about as a horse's body. And Kerin's surprise was great to find, near the first alcove, that very Sclaug with whom Kerin pleasantly remembered having had so much chivalrous trouble and such fine combats before, some years ago, this Sclaug had been killed and painstakingly burned. Nevertheless, here was the old yellow gentleman intact and seated at a lectern: but he at once arose and, rubbing together the long thin hands which were webbed between the fingers like the feet of a frog, Sclaug asked whatever could have brought Kerin so far down in the world.

KERIN frankly told his tale. Then Sclaug embraced Kerin, and bade him welcome, and Sclaug laughed with the thin, easy, neighing laughter of the aged.

"As for what occurred at Lorch, dear Kerin, do not think of it any more than I do. It was, in some features, unpleasant at the time: but, after all, you burned my body without first driving a stake through my rebellious and inventive heart, and so since then I have not lacked amusements. And as for this knowledge and truth of which you go in search, here is all knowledge, in the books that I keep watch over in this Naraka,—during the intervals between my little amusements,—for a sort of god."

Kerin scratched among the wiry-looking black curls of Kerin's hair, and he again glanced up and down the corridor. "There are certainly a great many of them. But Saraide desired, I think, all knowledge, so near as I could understand her."

"Let us take things in the order of their difficulty," replied Sclaug. "Do you acquire all knowledge first, and hope for understanding later."

The courteous old gentleman then provided Kerin with white wine and with food very gratefully unlike that of the *ignes fatui*, and Sclaug placed before Kerin one of the books.

"Let us eat first," said Kerin, "for supper, in any event, is a matter of vital importance, where knowledge and truth may turn out to be only a womanish whim."

He ate. Then Kerin began comfortably to read, after, as he informed Sclaug, rather a hard day of it. Now, the book which Kerin had was written by the patriarch Abraham: and by and by Kerin looked up from it, and said: "Already I have learned from this book one thing which is wholly true."

"You progress speedily!" answered Sclaug. "That is very nice."

"Well," Kerin admitted, "such is one way of describing the matter. But no doubt other things are equally true: and optimism, anyhow, costs nothing."

So began a snug life for Kerin. The nineteen candles remained always as he had first seen them, tranquilly lighting the vast windless corridor, burning, but not ever burning down, nor guttering, nor even needing to be snuffed: and Kerin worked his way from one candle to another, as Kerin read each book in every alcove. When Kerin was tired he slept: all the while that he waked he gave to acquiring knowledge: he had no method nor any necessity of distinguishing between his daily and his nocturnal studies. Sclaug went out and came back intermittently, bringing food for Kerin, and returning as a rule with blood upon his

lips and chin. And when Sclaug was away, Kerin had to make the best—a poor best—of the company of the garrulous large gander which lived in the brown cage.

Then, also, unusual creatures, many of them not unlike men and women, would come sometimes, during these absences of Sclaug,—whom, for some reason or another, they seemed to dislike,—and they invoked the gander, and paid his price, and ceremonies would ensue: but busy Kerin could not, of course, spare from his reading much time to notice these foolish and probably pagan rites. Yet he endured such interruptions philosophically; because at worst, he reflected, they put an end for that while to the gander's perilously sweet and most distracting singing.

And several years thus passed; and Kerin had no worries in any manner to interrupt him except the gander. That inconsiderate bird insisted upon singing, with a foolish, damnable sort of charm, and so was continually checking Kerin's pursuit of knowledge, with anserine rhapsodies about beauty and mystery and holiness and heroism and immortality, and about a variety of other unscientific matters.

"For life is very marvelous," said the gander, "and to the wonders of earth there is no end appointed."

"Well, I would not say that, precisely," Kerin would reply, good-temperedly looking up for the while from his book, "because geology has made great progress of late. And so, Messire Gander, I would not say quite that. Rather, I would say that Earth is a planet infested with the fauna best suited to survive in this particular stage of the planet's existence. In any case, I finished long ago with earth, and with all ordinary terrestrial phenomena, such as earthquakes, and the formation of continents, and elevation of islands, and with stars and meteors and with cosmography in general."

"—And of all creatures man is the most miraculous—"

"The study of anthropology is of course important. So I have learned too about man, his birth and organization, his invention and practice of the arts, his politics at large, and about the sidereal influences which control the horoscope and actions of each person as an individual."

"—A child of God, a brother to the beast—"

"Well, now, I question too the scientific value of zoomorphism: yet the facts about beasts, I admit, are interesting. For example, there are two kinds of camels; the age of the stag can be told by inspection of his horns; the period of gestation among sheep is one hundred and fifty days; and in the tail of the wolf is a small lock of hair which is a supreme love charm."

"You catalogue, poor Kerin," said the gander; "you collect your bits of knowledge as a magpie gathers shining pebbles; you toil through one book to another book, as methodically as a worm gnaws out the same advance: but you learn nothing in the wasted while that your youth goes."

"To the contrary, I am at this very moment learning," replied Kerin. "I am learning about the various kinds of stone and marble, including lime and sand and gypsum. I am learning that the artists who excelled in sculpture were Phidias, Scopas and Praxiteles. The last-named, I have just learned also, left a son called Cephalodotus, who inherited much of his father's talent, and made a notably fine Group of Wrestlers."

"You and your wrestlers," said the gander, "are profoundly absurd! But time is the king of wrestlers; and he already prepares to try a fall with you."

"Now, indeed, those Wrestlers were not absurd," replied Kerin. "And the proof of it is that they were for a long while the particular glory of Pergamos."

At that the gander seemed to give him up, saying, after a little hissing: "Very well, then, do you catalogue your facts about Pergamos and stag-horns and planets! But I shall sing."

"Yet I catalogue verities which are well proven and assured. But you, who live in a brown cage that is buried deep in this gray and lonely corridor, you can have no first-hand information as to beauty and mystery and holiness and heroism and immortality; you encourage people in a business of which you are ignorant, and you sing about ardors and raptures and, above all, about a future, of which you can know nothing."

"That may very well be just why I sing of these things so movingly. And in any event, I do not seek to copy nature. I, on the contrary, create here to divert me such faith and dream: as living among men would tend to destroy. But as it is, my worshippers depart from me drunk with my very potent music; they tread high-heartedly in this gray corridor, and they are devoid of fear and parvanimity: for the effect of my singing, like that of all great singing, is to fill my hearers with a sentiment of their importance as moral beings and of the greatness of their destinies."

"Oh, but," said Kerin, "but I finished long ago with the various schools of morals, and I am now, as I told you, well forward in petrology. Nor shall I desist from learning until I have come by all knowledge and all truth which can content my Saraide. And she, Messire Gander, is a remarkably clear-sighted young woman, to whom the romantic illusions which you provide could be of no least importance."

"Nothing," said the gander, "nothing in the universe is of importance, or is authentic to any serious sense, except the illusions of romance. That truth—poor, deaf and blinded spendthrift!—is none the less valuable for being quoted."

"Nor is it, I suspect," replied Kerin, "any the less generally quoted for being bosh."

With that he returned to his books: and the gander resumed its singing. And many more years thus passed: and except for the gander's perilously sweet and most distracting singing, Kerin had no worries in any manner to interrupt him, and no bothers whatever, save only the increasing infirmities of his age.

WHEN old Sclaug said to Kerin, who now seemed so much older than Sclaug seemed: "It is time for you and me to cry quits with studying; for you have worked your way as a worm goes through every alcove in this place, you have read every book that was ever written; and I have seen that vigor which destroyed me destroyed. I go into another Naraka; and you must now return, omniscient Kerin, into the world of men."

"That is well," said Kerin, "because, after all, I have been away from home for a long while. Yes, that is well enough, although I shall regret to leave the books of that god of whom you told me, and whom, by the way, I have not yet seen."

"I said, of a sort of god. He is not worshiped, I must tell you, by the very learned nor by the dull. However," Sclaug said, after a tiny silence, "however, I was wondering if you have found in these books the knowledge you were looking for?"

"I suppose so," Kerin answered, "because I have acquired all knowledge."

"And have you found out also the truth?"

"Oh, yes!" said Kerin, speaking now without hesitancy. And Kerin took down from its place the very first book which Sclaug had given him to read, when Kerin was yet young, the book which had been written—upon leaves of tree bark, with the assistance of a divine collaborator—by the patriarch Abraham when an horror of great



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darkness fell upon him in the plain of Mamre. This book explained the wisdom of the temple, the various master-words of chance, the seven ways of thwarting destiny, and one thing which is wholly true. And Kerin half opened this book, at the picture of an old naked eunuch who with a scythe was hacking off the feet of a naked youth gashed everywhere with many small wounds; then turned to a picture of a serpent crucified; and, shrugging, put by the book.

"—For it appears," said Kerin, "that, after all, only one thing is wholly true. I have found nowhere any other truth: and this one truth, revealed to us here, is a truth which nobody will blame the patriarch for omitting from his more widely circulated works. Nevertheless, I have copied out every word of it, upon this bit of paper, to show to and make glad the dear bright eyes of my young wife."

But Sclaug replied, without looking at the proffered paper: "The truth does not matter to the dead, who have done with all endeavor, and who can change nothing."

Then he told Kerin good-by: and Kerin opened the door out of which Sclaug was used to go in search of Sclaug's little amusements. When Kerin had passed through this door he drew it to behind him: and in that instant the door vanished, and Kerin stood alone in a dim winter-wasted field, fingering no longer a door-knob but only the chill air. Leafless elder trees rose about him; not twenty paces before Kerin was the Well of Ogde: and beyond its dilapidated curbing, a good half of which somebody had heaved down into the well, he saw, through wintry twilight, the gray eight-sided house in which he had been used to live with the young Saraide whom many called a witch.

THEN Kerin went forward, beneath naked elder boughs, toward his dear home: and he saw coming out of the door of the gray house the appearance of a man who vaguely passed out of Kerin's sight in the twilight. But a woman's figure waited at the door: and Kerin, still going onward, came thus, in the November twilight, again to Saraide.

"Who is that man?" said Kerin, first of all. "And what is he doing here?"

"Does that matter?" Saraide answered him, without any outcry or other sign of surprise.

"Yes, I think it matters that a man with a red shining about his body should be seen leaving here at this hour, in the dead of winter, for it is a thing to provoke great scandal."

"But nobody has seen him, Kerin, except my husband. And certainly my own husband would not stir up any scandal about me."

Kerin scratched his white head. "Yes, that," said Kerin, "that seems reasonable, according to the best of my knowledge. And the word 'knowledge' reminds me, Saraide, that you sent me in search of knowledge as to why life is given to human beings, so that you might in the light of this knowledge appropriately dispose of your youth. Well, I have solved your problem, and the answer is: Nobody knows. For I have acquired all knowledge. All that any man has ever known, I am now familiar with, from the medicinal properties of the bark aabec to the habits of the dragonfly called zyxomma: but no man, I find, has ever known for what purpose life was given him, nor what ends he may either help or hinder in any of his flounderings about earth and water."

"I remember," Saraide said now, as if in a faint wonder. "I wanted, once, when I was young and when the eye of no man went over me without lingering, then I wanted to know the truth about everything. Yet the truth does not really matter

to the young, who are happy; and who in any case have not the shrewdness nor the power to change anything; and it all seems a great while ago. For you have been a long time gone, my Kerin, and I have lived through nearly thirty years while you were getting knowledge down yonder from the bird that has the true wisdom."

"Of whatever bird can you be talking?" said Kerin, puzzled. "Oh, yes, now I also remember. But, no, there is nothing in that old story, my darling, and there is no Zhar Ptitsa in the Well of Ogde. Instead, there is a particularly fine historical and scientific library: and from it I have acquired all knowledge, and have thus happily solved your problem. Nor is that the end of the tale: for you wanted not merely knowledge but truth also, and in consequence I have found out for you the one thing which—according to Abraham's divine collaborator, in a moment of remarkable and, I suppose, praiseworthy candor—is wholly true. And that truth I have neatly copied out for you, upon this bit of paper—"

BUT there was really no understanding of these women who dispatched you upon hazardous and quite lengthy quests. For Saraïde had interrupted him, without the least sign of such delight and satisfaction, or even of pride in her husband's exploits, as would have seemed only natural. And Saraïde said:

"The truth does not matter to the aged. Of what good is the truth to you or to me either, now that thirty years are gone, and nothing in our living can be changed?"

"Well, well!" observed Kerin, comfortably, and passing over her defects in appreciation. "So it has been as long as thirty years! But how time flies, to be sure! Did you say anything, my dear?"

"I groaned," replied Saraïde, "to have you back again with all your frayed tags of speech and the desolation of your platitudes; but that does not matter either."

"No, of course not: for all is well, as they say, that ends well. So out with your talisman, and let us quicken the golden shining which will attest the truth I have fetched back to you."

She answered rather moodily: "I have not that talisman any longer. A man wanted it. And I gave it to him."

"Since generosity is a virtue, I have no doubt that you did well. But to what man, Saraïde, did you give the jewel that in youth you thought was priceless?"

"Does that matter, now? And, indeed, how should I remember? There have been so many men, my Kerin, in the tumultuous and merry years that are gone by forever. And all of them—" Here Saraïde breathed deeply. "Oh, but I loved them, my Kerin!"

"It is our christian duty to love all our neighbors. So I do not doubt that, here again, you have done well. Still, one discriminates, by instinctive preferences. And therefore I am wondering for what especial reason, Saraïde, did you love these particular persons?"

"They were so beautiful," she said, "so young, so confident in what was to be, and so pitiable! And now some of them are gone away into the far-off parts of earth, and some of them are gone down under the earth in their black narrow coffins, and the husks of those that remain hereabouts are strange and staid and withered and do not matter any longer. Life is a pageant that passes very quickly, going hastily from one darkness to another darkness, with only *ignes fatui* to guide; and there is no sense in it. I learned that, Kerin, without mulling over books. But life is a fine ardent spectacle; and I have loved the actors in it: and I have loved their youth and their high-heartedness, and their ungrounded faiths, and their queer dreams, my Kerin, about

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their own importance and about the greatness of the destiny that awaited them, while you were piffing after, of all things, the truth!"

"Still, if you will remember, my darling, it was you yourself who said, as you no doubt recall, just as you shoved me—"

"Well! I say now that I have loved too utterly these irrational fine things to have the heart, even now, to disbelieve in them, entirely: and I am content."

"Yes, yes, my dear; you may now well be content. For we may now settle down and live quietly, without undue indulgence in philanthropy; and we two alone will know the one truth which is wholly true."

"Good Lord!" said Saraide; and added, incoherently: "But you were always like that!"

THEY went then, silently, from the twilight into the darkness of the house which had been their shared home in youth, and in which now there was no youth and no sound and no assured light anywhere. Yet a glow of pallidly veiled embers showed where the hearth would be. And Saraide now said:

"It is droll that we have not yet seen each other's faces! Give me that foolish paper, Kerin of my heart, so that I may put it to a sensible use and light this lamp."

Kerin, a bit disconsolately, obeyed: and Saraide touched the low red embers with the paper which told about the one thing which is wholly true. The paper blazed. Kerin saw thus speedily wasted the fruit of Kerin's long endeavor. Saraide had lighted her lamp. The lamp cast everywhere now a

golden shining: and, in its clear soft yellow radiance, Saraide was making tidy her hearth.

After that necessary bit of housework she turned to her husband, and they looked at each other for the first time since both were young: and Kerin saw a bent, old, dapper, not unkindly witch-woman peering up at him, with shrewd eyes, over the handle of her broom. But through the burning of that paper, as Kerin saw also, their small eight-sided home had become snug and warm and cosy-looking—it even had an air of durability: and Kerin laughed, with the thin, easy, neighing laughter of the aged.

For, after all, he reflected, it could benefit nobody ever to recognize—either in youth or in gray age or after death—that time must endlessly deface and maim, and make an end of, whatever anywhere was young and strong and beautiful, or even cosy; and that such was the one truth which had ever been revealed to any man, assuredly. Saraide, for that matter, seemed to have found out for herself, somewhere in philanthropic fields, the one thing which was wholly true; and she seemed, also, to prefer to ignore it, in favor of life's unimportant, superficial, familiar tasks. . . . Well, and Saraide was a wise woman! For the truth was discomposing, and without remedy, and was, moreover, too chillingly strange ever to be really faced: meanwhile, in the familiar and the superficial, and in temperate bodily pleasures, one found a certain cheerfulness. . . .

He temperately kissed his wife, and he temperately inquired: "My darling, what is there for supper?"

PROVEN PUDDING

(Continued from page 37)

"I'll do the introducing as soon as I can get rid of this jug," observed Bee. Then, "My old college chum, Lou, Delia Bradley. Lou's other name is Dibble, but you'll call her Lou. And now as for you two, you're evidently getting on beautifully but I don't know if you've told each other your names."

"Well," Wilbur began, then with a swift new thought resumed his painting. "Don't move!" he cried, as Delia stirred in her chair.

"Anyway," said Bee, stripping the brown paper off the jug, "She is Delia Bradley and you are Wilbur Sayles."

DELIA sat taking in the scene in her still way. But her thoughts were like fireflies at night, sparkling confusedly. Lou, who was now around behind Wilbur critically examining the sketch as she got out of her coat and hat, took her insignificant self quite for granted. Bee, on the other hand, exhibited no surprise over Wilbur's presence. At home, back in Worcester, there had always been a mental bustling about and not seldom a strain in preparing for guests. This was like college, altogether happy-go-lucky. She liked it. But she didn't quite know how to take it or what to do. They'd hardly let Wilbur spend the night. Yet—they might. Her lids fluttered.

Lou sat down by that glass jug, thoughtfully considering it as she lit a cigarette. She was a competent-appearing person with likable brown eyes. Bee was off in the bathroom washing up. Wilbur painted on. "Lovely subject," remarked Lou, glancing up from the jug to the figure in the wicker chair.

"Beautiful," replied Wilbur. And Delia's lids stirred again. They might have been talking over a pet dog. Queer, casual, delightful people. Different. And here, Delia told herself, she was! In that brightly colored, that already legendary Village tucked away with its rambling streets and

its little old houses and its quaintly settled customs! Louise held her cigarette like a man, and inhaled with a relish. Feeling rather self-conscious about it, Delia lit another. She wondered if Bee, who had never seen her smoke in college, would say anything. Though of course she wouldn't. Not this easy-going, sketchy, delightful Bee of the Village.

"I've gone at this thing brashly enough," said Lou, "but now that the alcohol's here I may as well confess I don't know how to make the gin. I'm afraid we'll have to send for Arthur."

"Oh, not Arthur," called Bee. She was in the bedroom now, with the door ajar.

"I know, child, but he does know how. And he's got the drops you put in. I wouldn't even know how to go about buying them. And there's no time. I'll call him up. He won't pester you, Bee, if he doesn't get too drunk. We won't let him."

"If he doesn't pester me he'll set straight at Delia. She's the newest thing around. And you know Arthur."

"Well,"—Lou appealed to the newest thing around,—"don't you suppose you could stand it, Delia? He's just an egotistical poet. It's the only way I can think of to get our gin made. Wilbur might step over to the fruit store for the oranges."

"I sha'n't mind," Delia murmured.

"She's a poet herself," called Bee. "That's what it's about. . . . All I can say, Delia, is don't let him make love to you. He's a mess. Known hereabouts as the ever-ready. Arthur Rockwell."

Delia's eyes widened more than ever, and her mouth sagged open. "You didn't say Arthur Rockwell?" she breathed.

"The same. Know him?"

"Why—no. But—I've loved his poems. I—I thought he was English."

"English, my eye!" said Lou, with her engaging grin. "Minneapolis. His father's a manufacturer. He's just another of our Village refugees."

Delia was silent. But a little color had crept into her cheeks. She looked again out the window to hide it from them. The poems of Arthur Rockwell had stirred her. The man had an exquisite sensitiveness. And now he was coming to make the gin. They'd let him do that. Yes, Lou was calling him up now; and the obedient Wilbur was hurrying out after the oranges. A fluttering, unformulated defense was stirring among her thoughts; a defense of the man she had never seen and yet sensitively knew. Surely these girls didn't quite understand.

Lou was sniffing the alcohol when Bee asked, through the door: "What are you going to do with Wilbur, Lou?"

"Take him in for a few days, until we can work something out. He can sleep on the couch."

Delia slowly turned the pages of the book. Life, after holding her long in stagnation, was racing now, faster than she could think.

"I've had the poor boy on my hands for months," explained Lou. "He draws our advertising and window pictures at the store. Really gifted. But he's got a cannibal mother."

Delia's eyes widened. She had never heard the cant phrase.

"A terrible person," went on Lou. "Feeds off his nerves. Will hardly let him out of her sight. Strong as a horse but trades on his filial duty. All the old mother-love stuff. Just a fat, vain, selfish woman. She's killing him. I don't know yet just what I can do with him. We'll have to fight the mother off first. Try and brace his courage up to taking a real stand."

AFTER a discreet moment Delia slipped into the bedroom and hesitatingly pushed the door to. "Bee," she began, very low.

"Yes, dear."

"I'm going out and find a room."

"Why on earth—"

"I'll come back. I won't take my things. But—"

"You won't do any such thing!"

"But you see—"

"I don't see anything of the sort."

"But this man—"

"Who? Wilbur? Don't be silly!"

"But we can't both—"

"Oh, that? Bless your heart, child, it only means that you'll come in here with me!"

"You know it would be crowding you."

Delia was looking at the two narrow beds.

"Nonsense! Love to have you! It's all settled."

"But—"

"What now?"

"I can't help feeling a little—I suppose it's my old-fashioned bringing-up—a man right in here—"

"Oh, nobody minds Wilbur. I don't envy Lou the problem she's got on her hands. But as for that—"

It was settled. Delia, without speaking again, set about unpacking and hanging up her things. And Bee went into the living-room for a quiet word with Lou.

"You don't suppose you could get work for Delia at the store, do you?"

Lou considered this. "I'm afraid not. They make you begin at the bottom and work for years. You know. What's her experience?"

"Oh, stenographer, secretary."

"She doesn't look it. Sweet child, isn't she? I like that frail, wistful sort."

"She's a dear."

"How did she happen in here?"

"Just threw up a job in Worcester and came. Couldn't stand her home. I'm sure she hasn't any money to speak of." ("Well, that makes three of us," said Lou, cheerfully.) "And she's awfully vague. I've got to do something about her. She'll just dream."



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"Had you thought of Fred?" Bee nodded shortly. "Yes. But I hate to call on him. Of course, he could help."

"Shucks! Go ahead and call him. What's the harm?"

"I know. I might. But I haven't seen him for three months, and—"

"Bad as that, is it?"

Bee nodded.

"It'll mean a good dinner, at least."

"Yes. That's something. I might just catch him at his apartment." Bee considered her problem a moment longer, and then, with a brief, "Oh, well!" picked up the telephone. A moment later she was busy explaining in her most tactfully suppressed manner, while shaking a humorous little fist at Lou. . . . "Of course, Fred! You know I am. But I've been awfully busy. Well, I am calling on you. There's a little matter you can help me with, if you will. Advise me, anyway. No, I can't tonight, Fred. No, not a man. Some people coming in. A college friend of mine is here with me. Why, that would be nice. Of course, I'd love to. It will have to be early, though. I'm working, you know. Six o'clock? At the—"

To Delia, who entered the room just then, Lou remarked: "Bee's got her heavy lover on the wire. Likely to get dramatic in a minute. Better listen in."

"Shut up!" whispered Bee, frantically, clapping a hand over the transmitter. "My word, he'll hear you!"

"Well," she said, drily, a moment later, smoothing her skirt and looking down at her trim feet. "I've done it. Dining at the Crillon tomorrow evening. In state. With a banker. But Heaven knows what I'll wear."

"My God!" cried Lou. "I forgot to tell Wilbur to get ice. He'll never think of it."

BUT he did think of it. Brought it, dripping, from the drug store in a paper bag and put it in the sink. Bee set to work squeezing the oranges while Lou set out the glasses. And then Arthur Rockwell came. He was tall, dark, with full cool eyes and a perfect mouth. He wore a baggy old suit and a primitive flannel shirt out of which his strong neck rose like a column of marble. Delia couldn't look as high as that neck and face while he firmly took her little hand in his big one, but she sensed the swelling muscles of his chest. "He's Greek," she thought. "Pure Greek."

And he knew her! Had read one or two of her poems and actually remembered the name! His voice was gently vibrant. He had dignity. Command. Surely the girls didn't understand.

Two other men appeared. One, a Leslie Perkins, was in the cast of "The Gondoliers"—good-looking, without the sensitive quality or the inner beauty of Arthur Rockwell. He kissed both Lou and Bee, as if it were a matter of course. He laughed easily, and when not laughing hummed snatches of song in a softly resonant baritone. He couldn't keep long away from the piano. Delia soon decided that Lou liked him rather well. She hovered about him, apparently forgetting the unobtrusive Wilbur—whose one thought, indeed, was to get on with his sketch of Delia while the light lasted. So they kept at it, he and she, while Arthur Rockwell, as soon as the synthetic gin was mixed, sat on the table and talked with her. The other of the two late comers was a small young man with a fine large head and spectacles. His name appeared to be Jimmie West. He was thoughtful and quiet.

The cocktails were served and joyously gulped down to make way for a second round. Delia hesitated over hers, then sipped it in a gingerly manner. They weren't watching her. They were having a good time. Why not? Her nervously keen

eyes noted that Bee, when all were served, joined Jimmie West on the couch and slipped her hand into his.

Leslie Perkins sang "Rising Early in the Morning" from "The Gondoliers." Sang it well. Other songs followed. Arthur refilled Delia's glass. Delia, sipping that second glass, thought exultantly: "I'm getting a wonderful kick out of this! It's life!" She reached for a cigarette, and then held her face up to Arthur Rockwell's for a light.

Brisk little Bee was the first to rise. "I don't know about the rest of you," she said, "but I've got to get a bite of dinner and go to work."

"That's a thought!" cried Leslie. "If I drink one more cocktail there won't be but half a king in the show tonight. Why don't we have dinner together? Over at Salmi's."

"Come back here afterward if you like," added Lou, hospitably. "There's plenty of gin."

The idea caught hold. There was a bustling about for hats and coats. Delia heard the guardedly caressing voice of Arthur Rockwell close to her ear. It appeared that he was sitting on the arm of her chair.

"I'm not going to let go of you, Delia, now that I've found you. Have you seen 'The Gondoliers'?"

Her head moved softly in the negative.

"Then we'll slip in there for the performance. I'll bring you around here afterward."

She glanced timidly about as if to consult Bee. Then the arresting thought came—a stirring thought—that she needn't consult her. Needn't consult anybody. Bee would be busy. And they all went cheerfully their own ways. She could, at last, follow every whim. So she murmured, "I'd love to." And then, as a memory of Bee's dry little warning arose, nearly giggled right out.

OTHERS appeared after the theater. A girl with straight red hair who, some one whispered, painted magazine covers. And an extraordinarily handsome and gay girl from the cast of "The Gondoliers" who after a few cocktails insisted on practicing dance steps which she executed prettily. It hadn't occurred to Delia before that there was a serious technique to that sort of thing. After one o'clock the singing and chatter subsided and the party settled back by twos in intimate whisperings. The couch was crowded. No couple appeared aware of the others. Delia found herself appropriated by Arthur. He took it casually for granted that she would respond to his quick interest in her. And she couldn't resist. It was odd and pleasantly stirring that she shouldn't wish to. Her spirit was floating dreamily through the experience. Arthur, close to her, suggested: "We'll have dinner together tomorrow. What do you say? I know a charming Italian place over in Bleecker Street." In a flutter she acquiesced. For this was Arthur Rockwell. She had one of his books in her suitcase. Timidly she asked if he would write his name in it. He said, "Of course, child!" And added, "Drop in at my place about five-thirty. The girls needn't know." That was true. They needn't know.

It was long after that when Lou, with her pleasant grin, took the floor. "I don't know about the rest of you," she said, standing in the center of the room in the manner of one who addresses an audience, "but I have to be at my desk at nine o'clock and I'm going to bed right now."

"Go ahead," mumbled a masculine voice.

"I shall. But I'm going to turn you all out first."

And so, regretfully, by couples they looked about for their things. Leslie Perkins found the alarm clock in the bedroom and merrily set it off.

"For Heaven's sake!" cried Bee. "Do be

quiet! Do you want us to be put out of the house?"

Then they went, in some confusion. The dancing girl had to be restrained from sliding down the bannisters.

Leslie Perkins stood with Lou in the doorway. "I'll lug Wilbur over to my place," he said, "if you'll call a taxi, Lou. His mother mustn't see him like this. She'd be nagging him the rest of his life."

"No, don't bother. I'm going to keep him here for a few days."

"But my word! Honest, now—"

"Don't be silly, Les. The poor kid's going through the crisis of his life. And I'm responsible. Got him on my hands. And take my word for it, it's a problem. But something simply had to be done. He was cracking, Les. I nerved him up today,"—she smiled,—"to break with his mother."

"Well, I say, just how do you expect me to take this?"

"Sensibly."

"But keeping him here overnight!"

"Oh, Les, don't be Victorian! And you must go. Really."

"That's it! I have to go!"

"We'll talk it over tomorrow, dear. We've all had too much to drink tonight."

"My head is perfectly clear."

"Then keep your voice down. You don't want us to be put out."

"You've never let me stay here."

"Of course not. When you've thought it over you'll see how different it is."

He took her in his arms. "Damn it, Lou, let's get married. Will you marry me?"

"You know that's out of the question."

"I don't know any such thing."

"You simply must be quiet." She reached behind her and drew the door to. "There are people trying to sleep here on this floor."

BELOW, the street door closed. All the others, after a whispering and giggling time of it, had gone. He drew her close to him and kissed her. "Oh, Lou," he muttered, "if only you weren't so damn strong-minded. I'm crazy about you. Crazy about you! And you know it! Let's be married and work it out that way. I want you all to myself. No question of taking in stray dogs like this fool Wilbur. I want you for my own. Pitch in and build together. With you right there in the fight with me." ("I am in it with you," she murmured, but he didn't hear.) "I know I can put it over. You'll see my name in the lights on Broadway yet. You will! But this has got me on the run. I can't stand it!"

"I'll meet you for dinner this evening. You've simply got to go now. This isn't the time or place for a love scene."

"You want marry me?"

"It's out of the question."

"I'd like to know where I stand here—"

She looked soberly into his eyes. She was nearly as tall as he. Deliberately she kissed him, then with a low-spoken, "I'll meet you at six. Now go," pushed him away, slipped within the apartment and closed the door.

Bee was standing over Wilbur, who lay sprawled in the wicker chair.

"Is he all gone?" asked Lou.

"Not quite. He can talk. Can't you, Wilbur?"

"Course I can talk. Wha'd they wanna go'n sit 'n my paint for?" And he fell to whimpering.

"We'll just steer him over to the couch. He can sleep in his clothes. It won't hurt him. But have a look at this!"

On the couch, heavily asleep, lay Delia. The delicate face, in its soft frame of tousled pale hair, was flushed.

"Could anything have been the matter with that stuff?" Bee asked.

"The alcohol? Oh, no. Mr. Harpove has everything tested."



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"I don't think she had much."
"She just can't carry it, that's all. She's out." Lou stood smoking thoughtfully and looking down at the unconscious girl. "What a lovely little thing she is. But I don't know, I don't know— That sort gets ground up pretty easily in this town." With which she laid aside her cigarette, easily gathered up the limp figure in her strong arms and carried her into the bedroom. Then they dragged the protesting Wilbur to the couch, dropped him there, and set the screen about him.

"I rather wish we hadn't called Arthur up," said Bee.

Lou shrugged and looked about for her cigarette. "What of it? She'd have met him anyway, in our crowd. She knew about him, was all set for him."

"He was kissing her."

"Well, you say she's been to college. She's no child. Good Lord, we can't be expected to teach her her way around."

"I know. And she just naturally plumped in here. On her own. Wake me in the morning, will you, Lou?"

"Better get your sleep."

"Can't do it. Quite a day ahead for me."

"Going around to see the managers?"

Bee nodded shortly. They undressed Delia and themselves crowded into bed.

THEY sat at breakfast. Behind the screen Wilbur was snoring softly.

"He's good for three hours yet," remarked Lou, pouring out a second cup of coffee from the electric pot.

"Delia's tossing. . . . Coffee, that's what I need! I could drink six cups. I never felt so dissipated in my life."

"Quite a party," mused Lou, propping up the morning paper for a glance over the headlines. "I'm a little shaky myself."

"You don't look it, I'll say that."

"I've been thinking; we don't want them too often."

"Parties? No. I don't like this morning-after feeling. It always hits me hard. Since I woke up I've been seriously considering going on the wagon."

"I didn't think you drank much last night."

"Not so much. But I feel as dragged out as if I had."

"That's just loss of sleep."

"Well, don't parties cut into your sleep, young woman?"

"Admitted."

"And something tells me I'm going to need all the morale that may be in me this spring. My only chance is to get a bit in a spring trout or up at the Guild. Summer's coming, you know, when there won't be any work at all."

Lou finished her egg, turned the newspaper over, and lit a cigarette. "Well," she observed, "what do you say we call this party stuff off for a while? I'm game. I only wanted to shake Wilbur loose. God knows I've got enough to carry."

"That may not be so easy. They all know now that we've got the gin. Something tells me that these rooms are going to be popular for a while. Why, my word, Lou! Do you realize that you and Arthur made two full gallons? There's more than a gallon and a half left. If we don't do something about it, we're not booked to get any sleep at all."

Lou drummed briskly on the table. "I'll give it away," she said, with decision.

"But—eleven dollars—"

"Can't help that. I don't like this demoralized feeling any more than you do. It'll be worth more than eleven to me to be rid of it. And at that, I might sell it to one of the boys. Get my money back."

They heard a movement in the bedroom and turned. Delia stood in the doorway, wrapped in a kimono; a forlorn pale figure.

"Good morning!" said Bee, brightly,

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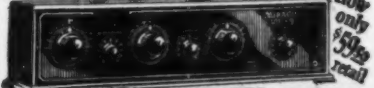
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reaching for the coffee pot. "Sit right down and have a bracer." Wanly the girl moved to the table and sank into the chair that Lou drew up. "I'm afraid we waked you." "Oh, no. I haven't slept much. Awful dreams. I"—she glanced timidly from one to the other—"I don't seem to remember just what happened."

"Nothing much," said Lou, in her good-humored way. "You just passed out and we put you to bed."

"Oh, I've made you so much trouble!" "Nonsense, dear! Drink your coffee. It'll steady you."

"I need it all right," Delia was rueful. "I hope I didn't—well, I don't seem to remember just what happened or—what I—did."

"You didn't do anything, child. You just quietly fell asleep. It was getting late, so Lou swept them all out and we went to bed. I wish she'd done it hours earlier."

FOR the first time Delia became aware of the snoring sound, and started. "What—what's that?"

"Only Wilbur. He'll be sawing away till noon."

"Wilbur—" Delia knit her pale brows. "Oh, the painter."

"Of course. There's his picture of you on the piano. Not a bad beginning, at that. He is sensitive to quality. Gifted, Wilbur is."

Delia listened again to that heavily rhythmic breathing. Then, with a startled question in her blue eyes, she glanced swiftly from the screen first at Lou, who was opening the paper, then at Bee, and finally down at her coffee. The question found no voice.

Lou looked at her watch. "Ten minutes more. I wish Heaven would protect this working girl. I do wish it would." Then, soberly, she turned to Bee. "I had a bit of a time with Les. In the hall, when he was leaving. I confess I don't know just what to do about him. He's shown signs lately of a developing possessive sense. Jealousy and all that. It broke out. About Wilbur. And when a man you've thought reasonable begins to argue hotly for marriage, it is rather puzzling."

"I'll confess that I like that rather homey, old-fashioned quality in Les," said Bee. "It's there, you know, Lou."

"Yes, it's there. He's always appeared to understand perfectly until just lately. Yet, it's there. I'll confess, when a man you think the world of—the man you've been absolutely frank with, begins demanding you all for himself, it's puzzling."

"Wasn't it just the gin?"

"No. I've felt it coming. The drinks merely eased off his self-control! Oh, I don't know about love. It's upsetting. I wish we could get along without it. I certainly won't marry Les, or anybody. However,"—she rose,— "it's time to dash to the mill. I don't know but what Bee here has the right idea, Delia. She doesn't go in for love. Fights them all off. I rather envy her. By the way, Bee, I'm having dinner with Les. And you'll be out too, won't you? Think you can fend for yourself, Delia?"

"Oh yes! Of course! You mustn't think of me." Delia knit her brows again as she spoke. A faint memory was stirring obscurely in the back of her heavy head.

"Well, I'll trot along! See you during the evening, likely!" And Lou hurried off down the stairs.

Delia sat over her coffee, head on hand, while Bee cleaned up the breakfast things. She wasn't interested in the paper. Bee returned shortly from the kitchenette, and with a half-smile considered the woe-begone figure.

"The cigarettes are right behind you, Delia."

"I don't want any. My mouth feels awful."

Bee slipped again into her chair. "I'm



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wondering about Lou and Leslie." She was thinking aloud. "I like them both so much I'd rather hate to see anything—It's queer how that possessive instinct hangs on in men."

"Isn't it in woman, too?" asked Delia, mournfully.

"Oh, of course. In the ones that can't or won't think. Acquired characteristics have a good deal of strength, I suppose. Women marry for a living and to protect themselves against the criticism of society. It's all mixed up with the economic thing. Property. It's primitive barter, I suppose, really. The average, unthinking girl simply puts her price as high as she can or dares. Perhaps it isn't quite fair to blame them. It takes a pretty bold nature to stand out against society." She was smoking now, and thinking. "Take children. I want some. I know my life as a woman won't be complete without at least one. But I'd give even that up rather than surrender myself, legally, to a man. And I won't fool around. I won't! Shucks, we aren't very civilized. Not yet."

DELIA pushed her coffee spoon a little this way and that. She had heard some bold talk back in Worcester—you heard it everywhere—but that hadn't had quite this frank ring about it. It had been concerned more with late automobile parties, with road-houses and bootleg liquor and daring adventure. There'd been always something promiscuous and defiant about it. "Hard-boiled," was the word. But there was nothing hard-boiled about Bee. You felt honesty in her, and abounding self-respect. She wasn't defiant or bitter; she was simply wholeheartedly independent. Delia thought that rather wonderful.

"There's Lou now." Bee went on. "She and I don't see things altogether alike. Naturally. We're two very different girls. There's a sort of glow about Lou. A warmth. And she's strong. She'd have to love somebody. She's thought everything of Les, and they've been charming together. It's nearly two years now. She's been absolutely loyal to him. There's a fine faith in Lou. She gives herself utterly to her job and her folks."

"Folks?"

"Father and mother. He's an invalid. She can't live with them. She has to have a personal life that they'd never understand; just a fussy, old-fashioned couple. But she's bought them a little home up the Hudson. And she'll never rest until every cent of the mortgage is paid off. Oh, that's Lou. She carries all their worries. Writes to them every day or so. This business of Wilbur is typical. He's nothing more to her personally than a dog with a broken leg. But she has taken hold of his case, and she'll see it through. Oh, she will! But if Les is going to get primitive about a thing like that—hmm! I don't know. You see, Lou loves him. A lot. She'd do literally anything for him. But she is independent. It's her deepest faith, as it is mine, that the modern woman must stand alone. Meet men as equals. And if Les—well, Lou has never spoken her thoughts out quite like that. And before you, too. She'd be pretty upset before she'd do that."

"Then they've been—Lou and Leslie—definitely—"

"Oh, it's an understood thing here in the Village. Everybody respects them. I mean the thinking sort of folks. You see, it was a matter of deliberate choice with her. When she found out she loved him, she stood for it. That's how Lou is. It has always hurt her that she couldn't tell her folks. You know, take him up to see them, and all. But what can you do?" Bee spread her little hands. "They couldn't possibly be brought to understand it. Simply break their hearts. And she's too fond of them to do that. It is a puzzle. Of



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course, there are other sorts here. Less attractive, or less honest, folks. Muddle-heads." She was silent a moment, then quietly and firmly shot out this warning. "Take Arthur Rockwell, who was here last night. I really believe he's the most utterly selfish human being I've ever known. Or at least the most self-centered. He really is, you know, a good deal of a poet. Known outside the Village, I mean."

"Oh, yes!" Delia breathed, with a warm touch of color in the low voice. But she didn't look up.

BEE'S keen eyes were studying her. "He has chances to go out and give readings. And the Poetry Society and the writers in the new magazines make a lot of fuss over him. He isn't just spoiled, at that. There's something hard and clear about him. But absolutely brutal. All for self. A regular young Richard Wagner. Any person or experience that will stir him he takes as rightfully his. Why, two years ago a girl over in West Eleventh Street had to get a job uptown to support him. And he took it like a king. Asserted all the rights of an old-time husband."

"What—what became of her?" Delia asked, in that odd hushed voice. The first faint color of this wan morning touched her cheeks.

"I don't know. Drifted out. It was nothing to him. He's been trying for a year to get me into a corner and recite emotional verse to me, but I won't have it. He irritates me."

"But doesn't he make—well, any money?"

"There isn't much in poetry, you know, dear."

"No. Of course." Delia's hands fell limp on her knees, and she stared at the wall.

"I rather imagine he dips into his Minneapolis father now and then. There's money enough in the background. Well, Delia, old girl, I've got to head uptown. Begin the old job-hunting grind again. I may not be in till night. I'm going to see if I can open something up for you."

"It's wonderful of you, Bee!"

"Better save that till we see if I strike any luck. You can cook yourself up a little dinner here if you like. Or try one of the restaurants around the Square. Sorry to leave you flat like this, but don't see how I can help it."

For some time after Bee had got into her coat and hat—looking smart enough for Paris, Delia thought—and run off down the long stairways, Delia sat there by the table, trying to think. But she couldn't think clearly because her memory was a fog. The man on the couch stirred and thickly spoke. It was confusing to recall that she was shut up here with him. She decided to dress, and retreated in some small panic to the bedroom. There, after a moment's hesitation, she locked the door. Perhaps it was silly. Neither Lou nor Bee would have thought of such a thing. But she couldn't help it. Her bed wasn't made, so she attended to that, with shaky hands. It was evident that the other girls must have slept together. She couldn't stay on here like this. Bee was dear about it, but it must be an imposition.

She couldn't bring herself to go back into the living room. Wilbur might wake up. He'd probably have to dress. So, leaving the door locked she sat in the stiff little chair that was crowded between bed and window, and, crying now, looked out at the scrubby bare trees and the studio windows beyond. She felt utterly a wail. It was only ten o'clock. Already the day seemed hours long. What could she make of the rest of it? Her sensitively quick imagination would surely range through whole cycles of experience before night. She knew that. She got up restlessly and opened her suitcase. She'd left her books there. She wanted to

read Arthur Rockwell. Merely thinking the name excited her. Bee would be right about him, of course. She remembered him sitting on the arm of the wicker chair; remembered, too, the musical timbre of his voice.

Of course it would be best not to see much of him. That would be what Bee meant. So she decided. But a bit of paper lay on the books in the suitcase. Memory stirred more sharply. Yes, he had written on it in pencil, in an extraordinarily fine clear hand. There it was, his address. Now why had he written it? There was a little thread of circumstance that she couldn't quite grasp and draw out. She returned to the window, holding the paper tightly in her hand.

IT was after eleven that the telephone rang. She sat frozen in her chair. The instrument was in the living room. Perhaps Wilbur would wake up and answer. But it rang again. And again.

She tiptoed to the door and softly turned the key. She knew she was flushing. Another long ring. She went in there. Behind the screen Wilbur was turning and muttering.

The voice on the wire had a familiar sound. Oh—Arthur Rockwell! "Don't forget we're having dinner together. I have to be at my publisher's the latter part of the afternoon. I should be back soon after five. But I'll leave the key under the mat, in case you should get there before I do. Second floor front, remember. Do make yourself comfortable, won't you?"

So it was left. She was going. She'd hardly had to speak a word.

Wilbur's feet thumped on the floor. Well, there'd at least been nothing for him to hear. She wished her color would subside. Now his rumpled head appeared around the screen. Thank goodness he had his clothes on!

"My God, what a head!" he groaned. And pressed both hands to it. Then, as an afterthought, "Hello!"

"Good morning," she replied, a thought primly.

"Girls gone?"

"Yes, they've gone."

"Where do you suppose they keep the coffee?"

"I know. I'll make you some."

She busied herself in the kitchenette while he washed up, and shortly set coffee and toast on the table.

"No good of my appearing at the office before lunch. Couldn't make it anyway." He was looking ruefully at his watch. "Lord, I hope Lou has squared me there, somehow."

Delia slipped back into the bedroom and stood by the window until he went out. He didn't speak of the portrait. Looking down, she saw him wandering listlessly into the little park. He stood there for a time, with an aimless droop in his shoulders, then dropped down on a bench. Two small children approached him, and he bent over to talk with them, appeared to be showing them his watch. He was, in sense, as young as they and as helpless.

The telephone rang again. It was Lou. "Wilbur around? . . . Oh, is he? Listen, Delia, would you mind telling him not to come to the store today? His mother's after him. Pretty acute situation, but I can handle it, I think, if he doesn't appear. But don't tell him all that. Just have him call up Mr. Hargrove and say he's not well. Grippe. Anything. I'll see him down there about five-thirty."

Delia put on her hat and coat. Then she got Arthur Rockwell's book from her suitcase. She'd take it with her and ask him to write his name in it. She felt extraordinarily timid about it. But surely he'd be willing, after—after what? What could she have

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FREE Send for this Wonderful Book

said or done? It was rather an unnerving experience to think about. She'd never been like that before. So she was going over to his rooms. She had said she would. Perhaps she oughtn't to. She felt daring and timid both. It was confusing. . . . and exciting.

With the book under her arm she left the house, gave Lou's message to Wilbur, and then walked slowly off across the square. It was a curious, endless afternoon. She sat for a time in a picture house. Then she rode up Riverside Drive on top of a bus. What an exciting city it was! Big, glittering, throbbing with confused life. Wonderful to be a part of it, have an admitted place in it.

IT was only a quarter to five when she found herself hesitating before the lodging house where Arthur Rockwell lived. Too early. That wouldn't do. He mustn't think her eager. She walked to the corner and back. Finally, bright-eyed—she really shouldn't be so excited; these things were natural enough here in the Village—she went in and climbed the stairs. There was his name, a card, fastened on the door with brass thumb-tacks. Timidly she knocked. There was no answer. She waited, and knocked again. For a brief time she stood irresolute at the top of the stairs, holding with a rather absurdly tight grip to the bannisters. There was still time to flee. But the thought of his key under the mat was exciting. She nearly giggled aloud. She bent and looked. There it was. She unlocked the door and slowly entered. Here he lived and wrote! The book-shelves reached to the ceiling. A Colonial table was littered with papers. She couldn't believe that it was her little self, from Worcester, alone, privileged, in Arthur Rockwell's rooms. She curled up on the sofa and looked at the backs of those hundreds of books. It began to seem a pretty wild venture. She must control herself, learn somehow to be natural and frank like Bee and Lou. They knew how to take anything humanly.

She heard a quick step on the stairs, and sat motionless. Whoever it was stopped outside the door. Was he looking under the mat? Then came a knock. Of course. She had his key, clutched in her fingers. Very slowly she moved over and opened the door. There he was. He closed the door, and bent over and kissed her. In an oddly matter-of-fact way. She tried to tell herself it was no more than a friendly greeting.

(This remarkable novel of rebellious girlhood is one of the finest achievements of the distinguished author of "Anthony the Absolute," "The Passionate Pilgrim" and many another famous story. Be sure to read the next installment—in the forthcoming December issue of The Red Book Magazine.)

TWO SINGLES CLOSE TOGETHER

(Continued from page 80)

of a crowding group of all-too-eager small boys.

That was why he was so outside of himself when his cue came. He picked it up with rare and beautiful decision.

"Two singles close together!" bawled the usher, unhooking the rope. "Two singles close together!"

But Mr. Tilton was starting down the aisle before the repetition of the cry began. Nervous, unreasonable exultation gave a little spring to his step. Ahead moved the assistant usher of the aisle with a little glowworm torch. It was not until the torch halted amid general darkness that our hero paid the least attention to the second single.

Of course it was the widow. You

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Rub nasal passages with

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Mentholatum Co., Buffalo, N.Y., Wichita, Kans.

might have known. Mr. Tilton knew at once from the vague tilt of the small, black hat. And somehow, this saucy hat became all at once a part of Mr. Tilton's nervous exultation, a better, sounder reason for his fierce, battling impulse, as if she'd been there all along and he had known it and so justly dug his elbow into the ribs of the Irish matron before leaving her.

"Here y'are!" hissed that snip of an usher. Out of the dimness spoke another voice—a lady's.

"Just a minute. I'll move over so that you can sit together."

And the widow and Mr. Tilton sat down side by side. Nobody knew that they had not come together to the dark movie house like any other pair of lovers—not even they themselves.

"Speak to her! Speak to her!" urged something within Mr. Tilton.

"I don't dare!" said Mr. Tilton back. "What'll I say? Excuse me, I notice you have a black darn in your gray stocking?"

But there she sat beside him. Ahead, miles ahead somewhere, figures danced and capered and swam on a reflecting curtain; and in a pit an orchestra pounded and blew and whined. All about in the dimness people gasped and murmured and breathed, oblivious to the real drama in their midst. All but God. I do maintain He was present that night and not at all oblivious. He was so sorely needed there. In the dimness beside Mr. Tilton she sat, softly stirring and running white little fingers through her crinkly hair, and Mr. Tilton at last found speech.

"It's very warm in here, don't you think?"

She looked up at him and smiled.

"Yes, isn't it? And so crowded! I scarcely expected to meet anyone I knew."

So simple it was!

A HALF-HOUR later she sighed and said: "How wonderful to be loved like that! Don't you think?"

Mr. Tilton looked at the picture. A brawny cave-man in Moslem attire was snatching a white blonde goddess, swooning, out of the black hands of a slave auctioneer. Mr. Tilton sighed.

"Well, of course, not so violently, perhaps," murmured the widow.

At a quarter of ten they sat down at a table in a caterer's shop.

"This has been the most wonderful evening, really," said the widow. She had tender, sweet eyes of brown, a little tired but very gay. "I was so blue! I lost my position two weeks ago, and then all of a sudden I got a new one this evening. And so I celebrated with the picture show, you know, and then—"

"Job!" queried Mr. Tilton's shining, mild blue eyes. "You?"

But his lips said:

"What will you have? I want a banana split."

"Oh," said the widow, "do you think bananas are good for you?"

"Well, perhaps not," said Mr. Tilton, rejoicing in a personal blush.

Of course there isn't any more to tell, except that it was several months, the length of the winter, before Mr. Tilton remembered or did speak to the widow about her stockings, the thing that started it all, you know. And when he did remonstrate gently, tactfully, she said what he had always known she would:

"You perfectly terrible man! What do you know about my stockings? Leave the room this minute!"

But she said it in the jolliest, friendliest manner possible, for by that time Mr. Tilton had tried several hair tonics and bought a striped tie and shaved his drooping mustache, and they were verily two singles drawn close together—in Mr. and Mrs. Tilton's living-room.



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A trial on one lock of hair is your safeguard, and this I offer free. Accept this offer and prove for yourself that your gray hair can be renewed safely, easily and surely.

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RADIO FANS—Listen in on WHY every Monday night from 7 to 7:30, every Friday night from 9:30 to 10, Central Standard Time. Loftis Bros. & Co.'s hour of music.

NO LUCK

(Continued from page 47)

come back vera soon, my dear—friend. It will only take you the hour. It is then we may sit down and talk of what we shall do. First I weesh to be sure that Leone has come. After that—"

"After that," exclaimed Baron, "we can dine together." He looked at his watch. "A little late, perhaps, but then the evening, at least, shall be ours!"

"Ah, yes, the little world of you and me!" she whispered and held out her hand.

BARON felt a tremendous sense of romance, adventure and responsibility. He felt efficient, powerful and able to make destinies. He felt new vigor of blood coursing in his veins. He ran down the stairs, failed to find Miss Featherday, who had disappeared. He opened the door and closed it after him. Somehow there were no taxicabs. He turned several corners looking down the long perspective of residential streets with their soldier-like regiments of houses in blocks. Then suddenly he came upon a street car line. He dashed out and swung onto the platform.

"Does this car go downtown?"

"Yeh!"

They rocked along. Baron did not look at the other passengers. His eyes were glassy with his dreams. Not until the car swung into the business district did he awaken from his reveries and suddenly spring up.

He knew the hotel. Once he had been there acting as an aide of a public utility executive in a conference. He addressed the information clerk.

"I wanted to ask—" he began and then he remembered Olga's caution. So instead of finishing his sentence he turned to the page on the register lying on the marble.

"Ha! There it was! A recent arrival. 'L. Abelardi, Washington, D. C.' The Countess' villainous brother-in-law must have arrived in Baltimore at about the same hour of her arrival. He wondered why Baltimore had been chosen as a meeting place. Why not Washington? He would ask her. She would answer him in her contralto, 'cello-like voice with its fascinating foreign accent. And now his first thought was to get back to her. Leone Abelardi could be attended to in the morning. Baron would attend to that cowardly cheat.

"Get me a taxi," he said to the doorman. The whistle blew; the cab rolled up to the curb. Baron got in and slammed the door. "Where to?" asked the driver.

Appleby said, "Why—I want—to go to—" He gagged. "Wait," he said. He began to search his pockets. No, he had given the advertisement to the other taxi driver. He remembered that. He tried to visualize the advertisement itself. "Rooms—" There the picture stopped. The street perhaps was—well, a numbered street. He tried to think. One hundred and fifth—sixth—seventh.

"I forgot," he said in a voice which sounded to him childish and silly. He returned to the hotel desk. "Listen," said he to the clerk. "Do you know this town?"

The clerk regarded Appleby severely. He said: "If you want a drink, you had better ask the house detective."

"I don't want one!" Baron replied wrathfully. "I want to find some friends here. I am not staying in this hotel. I'm just asking a favor. I've forgotten the address. The house is a brick house. It has a ground-glass door."

The clerk began to laugh and then to sing in a low voice—"East Side, West Side, all around the town."

"I'm not joking," insisted Baron. "What part of the city has blocks in it? I mean blocks and blocks and blocks with two-story brick houses that look like peas in a pod?"

The other threw a pen down on the blotter. He dexterously swung a city directory up on the marble counter.

"What's the name," he asked. "What's the name of your friends?"

"Why—er—I don't know the name. But I can explain that," said Baron, growing redder and redder. "The woman's granddaughter is—let's see— Well, her name wouldn't be there. Besides, they've just come to town."

The clerk slammed the book. "Look here, brother," said he. "You don't need any drink, believe you me! And if you're no guest of this hotel—well, *verbum sap!*"

Young Appleby retreated to the street. It was already nearly eight o'clock. He was hungry. Olga Abelardi di Vesta, no doubt, was hungry. He had left his overcoat. He was cold. She would feel sorry for him when he came back. He would go to her. Alas! How could he go to her?

Oh, yes, the paper—the newspaper! He had no knowledge as to what paper, so he found a news-stand and bought them all. "Rooms to Rent—Rooms to Rent." Apparently everyone in Baltimore had rooms to rent. And there were columns after columns. The room he had seen was a nice room. Most of those advertised were "nice" rooms. It was a front room. Half the advertisements spoke of "front rooms." It must be a sunny room—so many of the offerings were of "sunny rooms." Standing in the light of a store window, reading down these confusing columns, tracing his way with a cold forefinger, he began to be seized with a terrible panic. This was not so funny after all. He might never see the lovely Countess ever, ever again—nor his own dress-suit case!

He hailed another taxi. He said to the driver, "I want to go looking for a room. Now you and I can take these advertisements and we can mark 'em off in districts. I'm terribly fussy about rooms. Sometimes—I—er, have to see a dozen or two dozen before I'm satisfied—especially as to price."

"Price!" exclaimed the other suspiciously. "What do you think I am? It will take us ten dollars' worth on the meter to see a few dozen places. You could go to a hotel for that and get the bridal suite!"

"Yes, I know. But I'm peculiar. Here's my money. I've got the money. You'll be paid."

The first trial was a dismal failure. It was a gloomy, square wooden structure—a relic perhaps of the Civil War period. It was set back from the street and looked like the place where the murder was committed.

"I don't like that place at all," said Baron. He wished he had told the driver the truth. "In fact, I don't like this part of town."

"Well, what part of town do you like?"

"I like to live where the houses are all alike in a block and the blocks are all alike. I like brick houses with white-stone steps—like a row of soldiers."

"Huh! We certainly can fix you up. I'll take you to one of those districts."

"Districts!" exclaimed Baron, repeating that awful plural. "Is there more than one?"

"I should say there is!"

IN twenty minutes they had arrived in surroundings which Appleby considered hopeful. He felt that he had been there before. The district suited the description. The streets laid out in rectangles were made of blocks and blocks and blocks of houses and houses and houses. But the first one, to which they drove up, had crape on the door. Instead of having a push-button doorbell, there was a handle to pull.

"This isn't it," said Baron gloomily. "I—er—I mean that I never like rooms where there is some one dead."

"Is that so? Well, we'll try another." They tried five. Four of them had no white steps. The fifth one advertised had no ground-glass panes in the door and besides, it had been divided into two apartments and there were two bells instead of one.

"Well, let's go on," said Baron bravely. "We've finished this district, Boss," the other replied sullenly. "If you aren't satisfied here we'd better go across town and start a new one."

It was nine o'clock. Appleby had smoked all his cigarettes. He thought of the Russian girl and to the emptiness of his stomach was added a feeling of nervous loneliness. He shivered.

"Go on," he said. This time, once more the same block of houses, the same facsimile repetitions of residence; the same round of futile calls on numbers given in the advertisements. And at last, one with the white steps and the ground-glass in the panels of the door!

He sprang out. Yes! The push-button bell! He rang it. A light sprang up in the second story. Steps on the stairs. Perhaps these were the steps of the Countess herself. A light in the hall! The door opened. Framed in it was a huge woman in a wrapper.

"Well?" she asked. "Does—does—Miss Featherday—live here?" stammered Baron.

"Who?" "Miss Featherday." "No. What number do you want?" "I don't know." "Well, I say!" exclaimed the other in a voice which echoed out in the street. "Are you crazy? Lookin' for a girl and don't know the street. What is this anyway—some game?"

The door slammed. Baron faced the taxi driver.

"What is this phoney business anyhow?" said the tough individual. "Are you lookin' for a room, or are you tryin' to put somethin' over?"

"You keep still!" Appleby commanded. "No, I won't," the other replied. "I guess not. I'm not going to get into any trouble. I'm through. Pay me the thirteen dollars on the meter."

"Not by a good sight! I know the regulations. You're forced to ride me. If you don't think so drive to the police station and ask."

"You bet I will!" said the other. "Get in. The police will certainly be glad to see you."

Baron hesitated. Then reaching into his pocket he said, "Well, I don't want any trouble," and looked at the meter. The driver had turned it back to zero.

"How much did you say?" "Fifteen dollars." "Outrageous!" "Get in. Tell your story at the station."

BARON handed over the money. The other lit a match and by its light examined Baron's face. He said, as the match went out, "I might have known it! I guess you'd better be checked up anyhow."

He looked up and down the deserted street and then suddenly drove off at a rapid pace, stopping at the crossing to look up and down the side streets.

He was looking for a policeman! Baron realized this with horror. Suppose a policeman should get him? What story could he tell? He had met a Russian countess on a train, had left her in a lodging, had forgotten the number and the name of the street. Even to Appleby this sounded like a lie; he, himself, was inclined to doubt it. The policeman would undoubtedly arrest



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Millions of people know that, but Multitudes of persons with defective hearing and Head Noises are again enjoying conversation, go to Theatre and Church because they use Leonard Invisible Anti-septic Ear Drums, which are Tiny Megaphones fitting in the Ear entirely out of sight. No wires, no batteries, no head piece. They are Utmost Comfort and inexpensive. Write for booklet and sworn statement of the inventor who was himself deaf.

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No. 1. The "Butterfly" Fiery blue white perfect cut diamond. 18k. white gold hand engraved and pierced ring. \$82.50—\$2 Down—only \$1.50 a week.

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Easy for you to own or give as a gift any of these handsome rings. Simply send \$2. We will send ring you select on 10 days' trial. **Only if satisfied**, make weekly payments until balance is paid. If you do not agree it is an amazing bargain, return ring within 10 days and we will refund your \$2. You take no risk.

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him. There would be another grilling at the station house. The reporters would grin, and then there would be a roar of laughter. He could see what the newspapers would say: "Efficiency Expert of New York Loses a Countess." It would ruin him! It would make a fool of him.

He was seized with panic; he turned down the street and began to run. He ran until he could run no more.

When he had lapsed into a walk he could feel drops of cold rain on his face. It was beginning. He looked around at the houses. There were blocks of them. They were two-storied houses built of brick with white-stone steps. On both sides of the street they were all alike! He threw up his arms.

At the corner he stopped under a light and read the name of the street, then the advertisements. There were no rooms to let on this street—not one! And it looked so much like the street! The doors had ground-glass panels and the bells were all push buttons! Well, he would walk on. That was all there was to do. He could not break faith with the one who waited for him—somewhere!

WHEN the gray of dawn was breaking, Baron got off a street car. It was the second long ride he had taken during which he had peered out at the passing districts of the city trying to catch sight of a row of trees. He had started once, after midnight, to go to a hotel, to abandon his search. It was then he recalled that when he had run out from Alice Featherday's house he had sprinted after a street car and nearly run into a young tree planted in the sidewalk. Yes—a row of trees!

And here, where he alighted in the early dawn, was a row of trees. He turned the corner and passed from one block of houses to another. They were all alike. There was one with a light still burning in the front hall.

He stood looking at it, consulted his list of advertisements and sighed. A policeman approached, but he did not move. He was too tired, too hungry, too wet to care what further misfortunes came to him.

"Well, my friend—out late, eh?" asked the patrolman suspiciously.

"Rather."

"What's the idea? What do you see in those houses, eh?"

"Nothing."

"You looked to me as if you was pickin' one out. What's your name?"

Baron handed the officer his business card. "I've got a room somewhere and I can't find it."

"What's the name of the street and the number?"

This time Appleby was not going to be trapped. He said: "I only know one person in the house. They just came here recently. The granddaughter is named Featherday. She has a grandmother."

"Yes, Mrs. Martin. You're looking for them?"

"You don't mean—"

"Certainly—next block there—Number Thirteen."

"My—"

"Don't say it," cautioned the officer. "Come with me. I'll see you in, if that's your story."

Baron pressed the electric button several times. After a few moments he could hear pattering feet on the stairs. The door was opened and there stood Miss Featherday herself.

"For pity's sake!" she exclaimed. "So it's you! What on earth happened? I went to sleep at midnight. Come in."

She was attired in a dressing-gown of green silk. It looked well with her light hair braided down her back. Her deep blue eyes, with their candor and humor and good nature, inspected him without the slightest self-consciousness that she herself was in informal attire.

"Where is she?" he asked hoarsely.

"I don't know," she replied.

"She isn't here?"

"Well, she was here until midnight. I never had such a time with anyone. I never heard such things said in all my life. I can cuss a little myself too—especially when I'm alone—but these foreign ladies—aren't they temperamental?"

Baron stared at her. "Gone!"

Miss Featherday nodded gravely.

"Gone where?"

"I don't know. She wouldn't leave any address. She left a message for you though. She said if I ever saw you again, as I probably wouldn't—to tell you. It was about a place where you could go."

"Where was it?"

"I'd rather not say. I reckon you know where it was."

Appleby crumpled.

"Poor fellow," said Alice. "You're all wet and tired and maybe hungry. Tell me what happened."

He told her. He told her all. He could see her bite her lip. He could see shouts of laughter in her eyes. But she held back the sounds of it. She was a good sport—a well-bred person; he could see that and he was grateful.

"You believe me, don't you?" he asked.

"Of course, I do," she said. "Every word!"

"I might have known it would turn out like this," he said, clenching his hands. "Just my luck!"

"Yes. I think you are right. And now see here. You're wet. You're tired. You're cold and you need something to eat and some coffee. You go straight upstairs in that room and get off your things. Crawl right into bed and pull the warm covers up. I'll bring you something."

"Oh, I say," protested Baron.

"Don't you disobey me now," she said. "I know best."

He ascended wearily. He repeated to himself, "My luck! My luck!"

The bed was so clean and so comfortable and so warm! The room was so neat, except for the bureau top where the Countess had scattered a shower of face powder.

... He had dozed off. And now the door opened and Miss Featherday came in with a tray—there was steaming coffee on it. He sat up.

"Don't go away," he said.

"You must sleep," she replied. "You can sleep all the morning. Grandmother will be back this afternoon." She sat down.

What nice hands she had! They were folded in her lap. She was so healthy and yet so delicate in every line of her face, her neck, her wrists. How deep was the blue of her eyes!

A first streak of morning sunlight suddenly was thrust forward across the floor. Birds were twittering around the blinds.

There was a long silence as he looked at her.

"You must know people pretty well," he said at last. "I sometimes think people—some girls—have a sixth sense—they can tell the truth about anyone in one glance. It's wonderful!"

She shook her head.

"I'd hate to try to fool you," he said.

"I hope you never will," she replied with a laugh, but her sentence gave a delicious impression that her acquaintance with him was going to last century after century.

She raised the window a little.

"There," said she. "You just go to sleep. I'll close the door."

He watched her go out with the tray. He watched her with half-closed eyes.

"Well," he said, drowsily, "I'll be darned!"

THE last I saw of Baron Appleby was in Cleveland. He saw me in the hotel and pounced upon me and said it would do them all good if I would motor out for luncheon.



Be on your guard for signs of Pyorrhea

4 out of 5 are victims

The fight against Pyorrhea is a fight against overwhelming odds. Statistics prove that four out of every five over 40—and thousands younger, too—pay Pyorrhea's dreaded toll. Will you?

Just as the stability of a building is dependent upon its foundations, so healthy teeth depend upon healthy gums.

Bleeding gums are the first sign of Pyorrhea's approach. Then they begin to recede and the healthy pink color gives place to a pale, whitish tint. Soon the teeth are loosened, pus pockets form and drain their poisons through the system, often causing indigestion, rheumatism, neuritis and many of the other diseases of mid-life.

Forhan's For the Gums is a most effective agent in the fight against this insidious disease. It contains just the right proportion of Forhan's Astringent (as used by the dental profession) to neutralize oral poisons, and keep the gums in a firm, strong, healthy condition. Also, it cleans and whitens the teeth and keeps the mouth sweet, clean and wholesome. Even if you don't care to discontinue your favorite dentifrice, at least start using Forhan's once a day.

Forhan's is more than a tooth paste; it checks Pyorrhea. Thousands have found it beneficial for years. For your own sake ask for Forhan's For the Gums. All druggists, 35c and 60c in tubes.

Formula of R. J. Forhan, D. D. S.
Forhan Company, New York

Forhan's

FOR THE GUMS

More than a tooth paste—
it checks Pyorrhea





We Stars Must have fine teeth

By Edna Wallace Hopper

We on the stage must have beautiful teeth. I have consulted countless authorities on them.

For many years I did this: I used several kinds of tooth pastes to get their various effects. Then I used an antiseptic mouth wash to combat germ attacks. I used magnesia to neutralize the acids which cause tooth decay. Then I used breath deodorants. I spent a half-hour daily on my teeth. An authority told me the other day that my teeth were the marvels of all his experience.

But he also told me a new way—a way which eliminates the bother. Many great experts have combined to create a new-type tooth paste—a dentifrice which does everything at once. It contains olive-oil cleansers of the highest order. Polishers to beautify the teeth. Antiseptics to combat the germs. Iodine for the gums. Magnesia and other antacids to guard against acid attacks. Deodorants for the breath.

An army of experts combined their talents to create this new-type dentifrice. Now one application does all that I did with many.

The name of this tooth paste is Quindent, meaning five-in-one. It is made by Quindent Laboratories. They have furnished me sample tubes. Now dentists everywhere advise it, and druggists supply it.

It means so much to women that I urge them to try it. It combines all helps in one. Send the coupon for a sample tube. My Beauty Book will come with it. I will send enough for 20 uses to show you what Quindent means. Clip coupon now.

Trial Tube Free

Edna Wallace Hopper, 536 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago. Q39-RB
Mail me a test of Quindent

Keep Musterole on the bath-room shelf

Years ago the old-fashioned mustard plaster was the favorite remedy for rheumatism, lumbago, colds on the chest and sore throat.

It did the work, but was sticky and messy and burned and blistered.

Musterole has taken the place of the mustard plaster, without the blister.

Keep this soothing ointment on your bathroom shelf and bring it out at the first cough or snuffle, at rheumatism's first warning tingle.

Made from pure oil of mustard, with the blister and sting taken out, Musterole penetrates the skin and goes to the seat of trouble.

To Mothers: Musterole is also made in milder form for babies and small children. Ask for Children's Musterole. The Musterole Co., Cleveland, Ohio



BETTER THAN A MUSTARD PLASTER

"I live right next a golf club," he said. "I've been doing well—yes, better than well. I bought a little place."

It was not a bad little place. It was a small house in English half-timbered style with nice evergreens and shrubbery around it and an expansive view over the links.

He shouted up the stairs: "Alice! Oh, Alice! I've brought my old boss out. I couldn't get you to answer on the telephone."

"I'll put on another place, Baron," replied the voice over the stairs. "I'll be right down, dear."

We sat in their library—a comfortable place with an engraving of a Confederate officer hanging over the fireplace, filling the room with his calm stare.

And there, while we waited, Baron told me the whole story. We were both so engrossed in it that we did not notice when his wife appeared in the doorway.

"Well," said Baron at last. "There you are. No other man in the world would have been jammed into such a foolish situation. Think of it—a rich countess. And she liked me a lot, too. Well, I don't care now. Only, wasn't that just my luck!"

We sprang up as Mrs. Appleby came toward us.

"I'm delighted," she said to me. "I'm glad it was a surprise. I've been out with the baby all the morning. That is why I didn't answer the telephone, Baron! And what sunlight!"

She pointed out at the little garden—a garden which was somewhat sparse in successful plants—the garden of an unpracticed amateur. Only after lunch was I alone with her. She had sent Appleby off in the motor to buy some cigarettes.

"He told you that story," she said to me. "Oh, dear! He seldom has a chance to tell it. But I want to consult you. I want your advice. Here is something I found in a paper a year ago."

THE clipping had a Chicago date line. It said: "Found unconscious in a room of a hotel in the Western Avenue district, John Golthany, 52, in the plumbers' supply business in Terre Haute, was later able to tell the police of meeting a woman claiming to be one Countess Abelardi di Vesta, a rich Russian. According to his story she had valuable old masters and to gain possession of them she introduced him to her alleged brother-in-law. The following day Golthany was lured to a room where he was drugged and badly beaten. A check for fifteen hundred dollars, taken from Golthany, was the cause of the arrest of Montana Jack Doranti, who attempted to cash it. The woman escaped, but the police, from the description, believe her to be Maggie Flynn, alias Frenchy Sara."

I looked up.

"I would not ask you, except for the fact that you know Baron. Would it hurt his self-respect too much to see this?" she asked.

"Why no," I said. "Let's show it to him. Let's see what he will say now!"

When he came he threw the cigarettes onto the table. He said: "I hope you like that kind. Well, what's the matter?"

I pointed to the clipping. As he read it, his mouth fell open. Finally he looked up.

"Now what have I always said?" he exclaimed. "I ask you! Think of it! A whole trainload of men and that woman picked me out! But then—I never have any luck!"

The breeze blew gently, waving the curtains and bringing the very breath of spring. The awakening baby upstairs was cooing and gurgling. And his wife Alice sat with her lovely hands folded in her lap as if somehow she would always be happy and contented; she seemed so much a person who always understood.

You look ten
years younger



Sage Tea beautifies and darkens hair

When you darken your hair with Sage Tea and Sulphur, no one can tell, because it's done so naturally, so evenly. Preparing this mixture, though, at home is messy and troublesome. For only 75 cents you can buy Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound at any drug store. This is the ready to use preparation, improved by the addition of other ingredients. You just dampen a sponge or soft brush with it and draw this through your hair, taking one small strand at a time. By morning the gray hair disappears; after another application or two, its natural color is restored and it becomes thick, glossy and lustrous, and you appear years younger. WYETH CHEMICAL CO., Inc. - NEW YORK



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MATED

(Continued from page 77)

"Lucinda." He never called her that except in the utmost earnestness. "Lucinda, what's happened to make you so cynical?" She gazed at him, wide-eyed as a child engaged in futile questionings.

"I don't think I'm cynical, Daddy. But that's something that bothers me—oh, such a lot."

"And you've just told me"—he smiled his old, affectionate smile—"that you're in love, the way people ought to be before they think of marriage. You're not afraid of being poor—you'd do anything for him. You've got something, Cinders, that doesn't come any too often in this world. And will you listen to me, honey?" He had held up a warning finger. "Don't let this fine thing slip out of your hands. Take him while you can get him."

Because she was silent, affected by his speech, disturbed by the warring doubts within her, he went rapidly on:

"Remember this, my dear. Life is only years. And years are only days, one after the other. It's not their number that counts. It's their quality."

Chapter Twenty-eight

IN the following two months of ecstasy and depression and unease, when she saw her lover secretly and harrowed him with her avowals and refusals, little and much had happened in the Harbisons' apartment. Pelig had set his foot down. His lame back had gone from bad to worse, and he had made up his mind to become an annoying invalid. First he had arrived at the archaic decision that a woman's place is in the home; once his mind was made up, he put his rule in force. He never went to opera. Why should Matala? Dancing? What did an old woman want with dancing? Nope. He wanted to be read to and he wanted his back rubbed.

Colonel Fair came occasionally, to move about like some loose-skinned dinosaur of the Upper Jurassic Period. He smiled clammily on Lucinda, the face-slapping forgotten, apparently. Matala fawned upon him as the vizier's wife upon the sultan. He meant wealth to the Harbisons—wealth and bad repute.

During those months Lucinda had three encounters which bore upon the silent debate forever going on in her mind.

The first was with her distant cousin, Martha Carter, her playmate of Helicon Court. Martha had been Lucinda's classmate at Miss Fleet's, had been dismissed for inattention to her studies, had reappeared in New York as a Young Intellectual, wearing strong-lensed glasses and worshipping at the feet of Ned Theban, a Washington Square genius who edited an occasional magazine called *The Hangman*. Lucinda had found her a disappointment and Matala called her impossible; they had met only a few times.

One morning there had come a telephone call and Lucinda went to see her. She was living alone in a room untidy with dancing slippers, literary reviews, a portable typewriter, a tray of dirty dishes. Clad in a stained, handsome silk kimono, one stocking dangling over a felt slipper, Martha held out a hand that showed the discolorations of ink and cigarette smoke. A plain-faced, frowsy, eccentric girl, she chatted briskly about nine-hundred-word short stories and poetry too free for form.

"And I called you up, dearestine"—her saucer-blue eyes shifted a little with something less than her usual cocksureness—"just to tell you of my marriage. It's Ned Theban, of course."

Lucinda, seeing no trace of masculine occupation, asked: "Where are you keeping him?"

Van Ess now has
delightful, faint
new odor



From photo taken
before Mr. Tann-
rath commenced
Van Ess treatment

From photo taken one
year after Mr. Tann-
rath commenced Van
Ess treatment. Note
the luxuriant growth
of hair.

Chicago, Ill., 11-2-24.

A year ago I was almost bald. I now have a nice growth of hair due to constant use of Van Ess. After trying everything else, without success, I purchased a bottle of Van Ess at Duck & Rayner's.

It gives me great pleasure to inform my friends that Van Ess has been the cause of restoring my hair. I believe that anyone who uses Van Ess as religiously as I have will be benefited.

People with scalp trouble should make Van Ess a daily habit because it keeps the scalp clean, removes dandruff and makes the head feel glad.

Yours truly,

MR. A. M. TANNRATH
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This new way
must stop falling hair in 3 weeks
Must grow new hair in 90 days
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**Your own drug or department store gives
you this written money-back guarantee**

This is a direct offer to grow hair on your head. Over 2,000,000 men and women have tested this remarkable new way.

Your own drug or department store gives the guarantee. You risk nothing. Hence it is folly not to try it.

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Falling hair or baldness is not a disease. It usually comes from the scalp oil, Sebum.

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breed and feed upon the hair. Hair begins to fall. Baldness often follows. Remove the infected Sebum and your hair will grow. The Van Ess method removes the Sebum—kills the infection. World-famous dermatologists now use this same basic method.

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In three weeks Van Ess stops all falling hair. In 90 days it grows new hair. The guarantee is positive. Your own drug or department store gives it. If the treatment fails—money back.

Start this new treatment now. You judge at our risk. At all drug or department stores.

We Guarantee

In writing to stop falling hair in three weeks—to grow new hair in 90 days—OR MONEY REFUNDED. You are the sole judge. Your own drugist gives the warrant. Hence you take no risk in making our 90 day test. At all drug or department stores. Van Ess Liquid Scalp Massage.

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sage like finger tips of an
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and
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INSTEAD of flabby, fatty tissue which is a menace to good health and long life, you can now replace it with supple, muscular flesh, and a trim, graceful figure—at trifling cost and no inconvenience—no diet, drugs, sweating or rigorous exercise.

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The Medallion Reducing Belt for men and women is unlike any other device of its kind. It works on an absolutely fundamental and scientifically correct health principle—that of *massage*.

It is made of a flexible material sewn between layers of cloth, and shaped into medallion coils. The slightest movement of the body causes these coils to gently knead the skin as if it were being massaged by numberless fingers.

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This constant massaging action forces circulation of blood through the fatty tissue, breaking up the tiny globules, and disposing of them through the system like any other waste matter.

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Without obligation, send me booklet and complete description, including prices of the Medallion Reducing Belt.

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Address

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"Oh, he's in his room in Washington Square. I'm here. It's the only decent, scientific solution of marriage," she declared, tightening her incipient chin. "It isn't a penitentiary term, you understand. It's freedom. Freedom to love. We don't come together like a pair of thieves, locked in the same cell. Our meetings are an inspiration, not a duty."

"But, Marty, what do people say when Mrs. Ned Theban—"

"Bunk! You'd better not call me Mrs. Ned Theban!" The rebuke rang sharply. "I'll allow nobody to call me by any man's name. Get over your old-fashioned ideas, Cinders. You were born Lucinda Shelby; I was born Martha Carter. Insist on being yourself. Ned and I are lovers, not slaves."

Lucinda, who had considered marriage from so many angles, wondered if she would be satisfied with a lover whom she saw only occasionally.

"Aren't you lonesome sometimes?"

"Why should we be? We have our work. We don't stick around, boring each other. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, you bet your life. Ours is the only way, and the world's coming to it. Look at the married people you know. They could shoot at sight. Ned and I could never feel that way. We don't see enough of each other to be enemies."

Presently Lucinda arose, gave her old friend a rather embarrassed congratulatory kiss and said good-bye. So there was another light on the subject, she thought. Married people could endure each other by the simple means of staying apart. A matron could keep her own name, go about business as usual. . . . And how about the children?

HER second encounter was with Jerry Malone, whom she had last seen in his Greenbriar-Pelham elevator. She had stopped before a bright store front in Fifth Avenue; a hundred neckties of identical design and shade were displayed around a wooden torso, draped with a yard of harmonious shirtings.

"Good afternoon, miss," said a melancholy voice; looking around, she beheld a surprisingly changed Jerry. His hat and coat were new, the hat a little small, the coat too long in the sleeves. His face, grown ruddy and plumper than of old, still retained its lines of sorrow.

"Jerry!" She clasped his reluctant hand. "I'm so glad to see you. And how awfully well you're looking!"

"So-so," he admitted, but there was the radiance of cathedral windows in his eyes, belying his seamy face. "A man can't last forever, but I'm holding me own. You're looking healthy, Miss Lucinda!"—a rare concession for Jerry. "You've grown a foot, I'll be thinking. Maybe two."

"I'm so very well, Jerry," she laughed, "that I'm sure something dreadful's going to happen."

"It might at that," he agreed. "It's a marrying year, Miss Lucinda. Did you notice me necktie, now?" She had remarked it, a brilliantly azure one, identical with those in the window. "It tells the tale," said Jerry. "Maybe you'll be remembering a girl I mentioned, living in Swampscott, Mass.? Well, she had her way, and this is me honeymoon." Save for the glory of his eyes he might have been announcing a funeral.

"How delightful!" cried Lucinda.

"I'm not saying it ain't," conceded Jerry. "But she's got her notions. She wants me to live up to me social position. 'I'll be buying your neckties,' says she this morning. 'Not while I'm conscious,' says I. So I made tracks for this store, I did."

Lucinda wanted to know about him. Was he still in Philadelphia?

"No more," he gloomed. "I've kicked away the ball and chain and took on another. Maybe I mentioned Saug Point, four

hours from New York in a Ford. Well, it's a Ford for me, and if I get me bride out there alive, what with the sand trucks and moving vans along the Jericho Pike, it'll be the grace of God, not mine."

His fortunes had risen, and his tale, if true, was another romance of America's rapid change. He recited it all with the air of a pauper telling his grievances to a district judge. In a Philadelphia elevator he had complained of a brother in a Long Island lace works. After his discharge from the Greenbriar-Pelham he had found Tim, advanced to a partnership. Jerry had begun humbly by nailing crates, had stepped up to a foremanship and been taken into the firm.

"I believe every word," said Lucinda, heartily. "And how does Mrs. Jerry like it out at—"

"Saug Point. She aint seen it yet. Maybe she'll hate the look of it. But there's no telling how a woman'll like anything," says Adam when he found the apple. And you'll be coming out there some day, maybe?" Again the elfin light showed under his bushy brows.

"Of course, Jerry!" she laughed. "You haven't forgotten how you just as good as promised to give me a job."

"We're short-handed. You're hired." He said this with something surprisingly like a smile.

"I wasn't thinking about myself." Her joking manner was gone. "But listen, Jerry, suppose I should send out a young man, do you think you could find him something to do?"

"On your recommendations, maybe?" He grew canny.

"I guess he could do about anything he set out to learn."

"He's hired," announced Jerry, but out of a corner of his melancholy eye she could see that he was speaking as one Irishman to another.

THE third encounter was brief, disagreeable, decisive.

Lucinda remembered the cluttered black-walnut of Cynthea Court, silken things tossed everywhere, shoes kicked under the bed while a pretty young woman crooked her back to some level with the broken-hinged mirror in which she adored her image. Then there had been the almost windowless back bedroom in a Philadelphia hotel—trunks, suitcases, hat-boxes half-opened parcels, bits of broken food and clothes, clothes, clothes, a colorful whirlwind, while a woman, a little less lovely, wooed her reflection in a glass whose very smartness seemed to mock her ostentatious poverty.

And mirrored again sat Matalea, still busy with her person, although her body creaked a little in its premature decay. The atmosphere of the broad room was soft—soft lights, soft hangings.

"Come in, Lucinda!"—from her mirror. "Wasn't that Cole boy here again this afternoon?"

"Yes, Mother. He came for a little while."

Mrs. Harbison rubbed the sacks under her eyes, looked at herself disapprovingly, then said: "You were very rude to Willie Harbinger last night."

"I didn't mean to be," replied Lucinda, trained by a lifetime to be patient with her mother.

"He's devoted to you. Everybody's talking about it. There's no sense in your treating him like that." She snorted and tried a wreath in her hair. "After all I've done for you, it seems to me you could try a little. You could snap him up in a minute if you'd only pay a little attention to what you're doing."

"But, Mother," said Lucinda gently, calmly, "I don't want to marry anybody."

"Have you lost your mind?" Matalea was losing, if not her mind, her temper.

"I don't think so." Lucinda paused, considering. Finally she said: "At least, if I wanted to marry I couldn't consider a man I didn't care for."

"You'll never be happy if you don't learn some common sense." Lucinda gave a quick glimpse at her Mother's face, grown anile with a constant wistfulness for things she never could have. "I don't like this mooning around over nothing," she complained. "What are you thinking of? Marrying for love?"

"If I wanted to marry—"

"Well, if love's in your head, get it out. I married Fairchild Weaver for love. I ran away with him after a country-club dance. How long did it last? A week."

Fairchild Weaver—her father. Even when he died Lucinda had not felt a pang. Yet she had been born of the only real passion, perhaps, that had touched those two lives.

"Weren't you glad, even of that week?" she asked; but her mother made no reply. She was busy with her maid, who had just come in with a blue evening gown, to replace the gold one which she had rejected.

Chapter Twenty-nine

PELIG'S back—and in those months Pelig had become to his family nothing more than a back attached to a fierce little goblin—was unusually annoying one afternoon in later spring. Lucinda was away, heaven knew where, and Matalea had exercised her muscles to exhaustion. He subsided at last and Shimba announced Mrs. Clarkett on the telephone. Matalea answered eagerly; the Clarketts represented a contact with the outside world which her husband had of late denied her.

"Hello, Matalea!" The close-cropped nasal New York voice of Molly Clarkett was music to her ears. "Where have you been keeping yourself? Pelig's ill again? I'm so sorry. Matalea, do you know the Garnegals—Lady Garnegal and her son, the young Marquis?" Matalea thrilled. "They're perfectly adorable, and they're down from Boston, just overnight. They want to see the Kettle Drum Revue. It's all in such a hurry. But I wonder if you and Lucinda could come. He's perfectly charming, and I'm sure he'd be perfectly crazy about Lucinda—"

"Molly, how dear of you!" chimed Matalea. "Lucinda will be tickled pink to meet young Garnegal."

"We're dining at Louis Sherry's—seven-thirty."

"It's dear of you," Matalea assured her again before she hung up the receiver.

This was in direct defiance of Pelig, but she was desperate. She had been home every night for a week. The Garnegals, moreover, were a stroke of luck almost past believing; she knew their history by heart: how Lady Garnegal, a widow, American born, British wed, had brought her son, heir to an impoverished title, to America where girls are eager and fortunes plentiful. . . . Here was a chance, however faint. She would work out a plan for Lucinda. . . .

"Matalea," whined a thin voice from the other room, "what's all this noise about?"

She went into the characterless library, where Pelig Harbison had chosen to plant himself in his padded chair and listen, listen all day long.

"Molly Clarkett has asked us to dine with them and meet Lady Garnegal and the young Marquis," she explained smoothly.

"You're not going."

She looked at him for an instant, and some of the long-smothered hatred must have shown in her eyes. Pelig, thin, pallid, scrawny, pop-eyed as an unhatched bird,

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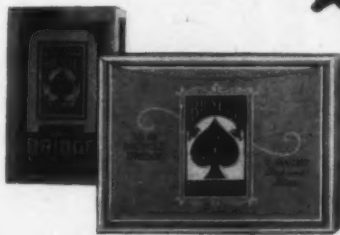
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huddled in his chair, returning stare for stare. The encounter was short. Matala turned and whisked out of the room.

She was halfway down the hall when she stopped and swore softly to herself. He wasn't going to cheat her out of this. It was the chance of many seasons. Think how much it would mean to them to be seen in public with the Garnegals! Pelig had cheated her long enough. . . . She stole back to the library door, peered in and saw him, white and sickly, a bag of bones, huddled in his chair. He looked like a dying man, but how much longer would he last? He was surprisingly tough. He had weathered accident, disease, age and still persisted. He had had his revenge. Her youth was gone. . . . But he shouldn't cheat her any more.

IT was nearing six o'clock and she was in her bedroom, partially undressed, improving herself before a triple mirror. A smile was on her face; excitement burned in her cheeks, giving a momentary illusion of youth. A wisp of gray hair, obtruding through the yellow, offended and frightened her. She tucked it back nervously. She wouldn't be old. The flame was still with her, and tonight she'd show it at its best.

Her maid came in, holding a rose-colored dress over her two arms. "Miss Lucinda is on the telephone, madame," she said. Matala turned impatiently. "Tell her to come home—at once." The woman was gone just a minute, then came back with the announcement: "Miss Lucinda wishes to say she will not be home for dinner."

Matala was astounded. Like many another rebel chieftain, she had awakened to insurrection in the ranks. Brushing her maid aside, she scuttled along the hall toward the telephone. Pelig, as she went by, turned and glared at her.

"Lucinda," she called into the mouthpiece, speaking softly lest she should again arouse the watchful little monster, "you've got to come home right away."

"Is anything the matter, Mother?" The girl's voice sounded queer, agitated.

"Matter! We've been asked to dine with Lord and Lady Garnegal. You must hurry. Where have you been? Dinner's at half-past seven."

"But Mother, I can't come. I've promised Martin—"

"What do I care what you've promised Martin? Come right away."

Silence.

"Lucinda!"

"Look here, Matala." The voice was from the library where it spurted thin, sour, imperious.

"Mother," said Lucinda's voice at last, "I really can't come home now. Martin's asked some students—"

"Matala, do you hear me?" The summons came fuller, stronger from the library. "What's this business about dinner? Look here, damn you—"

"Mother, I'm sorry, but I think I can't come." Her daughter's voice was firm.

"You will come. Come at once! Lucinda! Lucinda!" Matala almost screamed. But she was commanding only vapors. Lucinda had left the telephone. Matala gave a stifled, angry wail.

"Matala! Matala! Now you look here!" Pelig Harbison was shouting as she shot by the library door.

LATE spring, and May presaging June. At the corner of Central Park where Fifth Avenue ends dissolutely and becomes a slum, a foreign mob moved languidly, influenced by a sylvan air which even the gases from automobile exhausts could not quite poison to death. Lucinda turned that corner, walking more eagerly than the rest, for she was going cross-town to dine with Martin Cole.

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She had openly disobeyed her mother, perhaps for the first time in her life. She had cut a bridge behind her; she was walking toward a dream on the other bank. She told herself that she didn't care; she had worn her nerves to a tatter with evasions and stolen meetings. Now she had come out in the open. Martin had put great stress on this dinner, arranged it days in advance. He had wanted her to meet Wanda Stern. . . . She found herself wishing that he hadn't asked Wanda. It should have been their first dinner alone.

Around a corner of Morningside Park she went into a side street and saw Martin and a young woman, standing on the steps of a little Italian restaurant; they were talking so busily that Lucinda was unobserved until she had almost come up to them.

"Hello!" he said, fumbling with his old hat. "We got here a little early. Miss Shelby, this is Miss Stern."

Lucinda saw a pair of wide gray eyes, a small aquiline nose, a sensitive mouth, a wisp of dark hair straggling from under a rather untidy hat. The girl was pretty in a Muscovite fashion; her look was kindly and clever. She greeted Lucinda with a sureness which galled her unreasonably.

"A quarter of seven," said Martin awkwardly in his rôle of host. "We eat on union time around here."

"You'd better get a table, Martin, or we won't eat at all," suggested Miss Stern. Her voice was pretty, her air proprietorial. While Martin was engaging his table she had time to ask Lucinda if she had been about the University much. No, Lucinda knew little about it. She had wanted to go to Radcliffe, she confessed, but family affairs had stood in her way. "What a shame!" cried Miss Stern; the remark was not patronizing, but full of friendliness.

THEY dined in a narrow, white-tiled room with tables pushed in rows against either wall. Martin fumbled with the menu, but Miss Stern came promptly, good-naturedly to his assistance. "He never knows what he's eating," she explained. "No, Carlo,"—to the waiter,—"*we* won't have the regular dinner. Bring us a *hors d'œuvre*, the large one, with plenty of *salame* and ripe olives. We'll have ravioli—do you like it, Miss Shelby?"

"Very much," said Lucinda, not knowing much about it. Her mind was on the new girl, sensibly, efficiently ordering a dinner. She knew what Martin liked. She worked with him on the paper. Her father, a man of means, had offered him a situation, just as soon as he was graduated. . . .

Martin was anxious to bring the two young women together, that was certain, for he did his utmost to interpret Lucinda to Wanda, Wanda to Lucinda. The girl from Park Avenue, however, remained the silent spectator. Wanda talked fluently well, but in a gibberish that was half unintelligible to Lucinda.

"I told him that narrative should be implicit, not explicit. You mustn't twist people's necks to make them see what you want them to see. He told me I was pedantic. I told him he was dogmatic."

"Too doggone dogmatic," grinned Martin—then explained: "Miss Stern's out for the Bennett Prize."

They had so much in common, these two, thought Lucinda. They spoke in alphabetic riddles of History A, of Economics B, of Biology C—or so it sounded to Lucinda. And it was almost too much for her when the other girl, resting her firm little chin on her hand, looked up at him and asked:

"Martin, have you been working on that second act?"

"Well," he confessed, glancing at Lucinda, as if sensing her nervousness, "I've hacked a little at it this week."

"You shouldn't," said Wanda, her soft voice vibrant. "You're working too hard already."

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"Oh, but I got a brainstorm. I was crazy to see how that scene would finish. The one where *Corporal Stoddard* comes in with the teakettle."

"We're trying to write a play," explained Wanda with a soft smile for Lucinda.

"Are you going to have it put on?" Lucinda was naive.

"Probably not. Who'd take it, do you think, Martin? Not the Theater Guild. They can't stand anything that isn't grotesque. Wouldn't it be fun to start a little theater of our own!" She brought her white hands together.

"That takes money," decided Martin.

"Of course." There was everything in that remark. Wanda could command money. She could command Martin if she chose. During a discussion, complicated by college jargon, Wanda turned to Martin's guest and asked: "Don't you act?"

"I don't do anything," said Lucinda, and her smile concealed a little bitterness.

When the dinner was over and Miss Stern declared that she must rush away and finish up a week's work, Lucinda had time to take Martin aside and whisper with him, confidentially, secretly.

"What do you think of her?" he asked. They were outside, hailing a bus, having decided to ride downtown and see the nine o'clock show at the Pleiades Theater.

"She's very nice," said Lucinda. "She seems to know so much and do so many things."

She had tried to keep her voice level and to quell a rising emotion, which she owned was jealousy.

IT was a dull night at the Pleiades Theater and they sat among empty chairs in the back of the house. While giant heroes and heroines stared, wept, contorted their dead white faces on the screen, the lovers sat withdrawn into their own world. He had reached for her hand, and she let it rest in his, thrilling with the pressure. Why had he asked her to dine with Wanda Stern? She had hated to see that girl, so much wiser than she, so much abler, so much richer, adoring him with her eyes, locking him in her confidences. And what a wife she would make for him! "What's the matter, Cinders?" he whispered, leaning toward her in the darkness. "Nothing," she lied promptly. "There must be. You haven't said a word for the last half-hour."

"I was just thinking."

"What?"

"What you'll do when you graduate."

"Not a thing, Cinders. Not a thing unless I'm with you."

She looked at him strangely; his face showed dim and passionate in the twilight space. The melancholy notes of a mechanical organ added to the effect of an invisible presence, a fate close at hand.

"You can be with me, dear—" she began to tell him, but her voice broke.

"Then you'll marry me, dear? You will?"

Why couldn't he understand? She tried for only an instant to resist. Then the Invisible fell all around her, enveloped her, weakened her in a blind rush of passion. He wanted her. It was his way.

"Yes, Martin," she whispered, and he put his arm around her and held her close, as common lovers do. . . .

So that was settled. He had won. There was no other way. Immersed in him, happy in him, she had yielded everything. How foolish she had been to stand out so long! Fate lurked in the background, in the twilight of the cheap picture theater. And when they arose to go, it seemed to arise with them, to follow them, an unseen, an insidious, a perfumed vapor.

"We won't be like other married people, will we, Martin?" she asked with shining eyes.

"Indeed, darling, we won't."

THE KETTLE DRUM REVUE was over and the Clarkettes' party paused outside with the usual after-theater question, "Where shall we go now?" Young Garnegal, trim and slim as a race-horse, sloping as to brow and shoulders and with that gently deferential manner which, in the well-bred Briton, conceals a hereditary arrogance, was consulted as to his wishes. Molly Clarkett suggested the Thimble Club, where they could dance all night. Almost without saying so, the Marquis let it be known that he preferred cards.

"He's a wretched little gambler," explained Lady Garnegal, feigning annoyance, deferring to the young lord.

"Why don't we drive over to our place?" suggested Matalea at the risk of offending Molly Clarkett. But Molly Clarkett was surprisingly amenable.

"You're just around the corner," she decided, "and we're so far uptown."

Perhaps she was trying to help Matalea in her ambitious schemes, for Molly too had plans for Lucinda. Brilliant matches add luster to their makers. So the Harbison apartment it was, and Matalea was dreaming audaciously as she sat in her car with the boyish Marquis. The Clarkettes took Lady Garnegal and the silent Mr. Fry. Matalea would telephone Vera. Then there would be Lucinda. . . . In the ecstasy of the moment she almost forgave her daughter's insubordination, almost forgot her own against the relentless Pelig. . . .

The hall seemed too silent as Matalea marshaled in her party. Then Shimba came forward for the wraps. Matalea went ahead of her guests into the drawing-room. Nothing surprised her that night. She was only a little angry when she saw Lucinda and a strange young man spring up from a padded chair before the cold fireplace. Confusion was on their faces, and mollifying smiles. . . . It required no clairvoyance to see that they had been in each other's arms.

"So you're home!" Matalea kept her voice low.

"Yes, Mother. Martin and I came in to—" "Never mind!" The command was swift.

"I've brought some people home—Lord and Lady Garnegal—and I want you to help me." During this conversation she had given not the slightest heed to Martin Cole, who had picked up his hat and taken a few faltering steps toward the door.

"Won't you stay, Mr. Cole?" she turned upon him suddenly. "We're going to play bridge. You play, don't you?"

"Why yes, I do," he confessed, after an appealing, unanswered glance at Lucinda, who, had she dared, would have rushed in to save him from ruin.

LUCINDA had given place to Vera Cromwell, who came in just after Shimba had mixed highballs and brought sandwiches. She preferred to watch, having pictured Martin a heavy loser, crippled financially on the very night when they had planned their hard struggle together. . . . But almost from the moment the cards were dealt she discovered the vanity of her misgivings. Vera Cromwell was Martin's partner—possibly that aided him, since Vera's success at cards was notorious. But Martin played with both luck and skill. He was taking Lord Garnegal's money away from him. This was hard to believe, and it filled Lucinda with an unholy delight, as well as a renewed admiration of her lover. . . . He could succeed at anything—except dancing. She must teach him that; it might be fun after they were married. . . .

Being disengaged, her eyes free to rove about, Lucinda was the first to see the apparition in the hall. It stood there stark, white, hollow-eyed like a skeleton in a loose flowered dressing gown—Pelig Harbison. Too frightened to give the alarm—and how should she give it?—the girl stared out at the aged, sickly figure of hate. His silk pajamas were

open at a scrawny throat; his fleshless head seemed to bob on a neck too thin to hold it; his eyes were like coals of fire, his lips drawn tight across his too regular teeth.

The gamblers played on. How long would he stand there, how long had he stood like a bright-plumed, shriveled bird of ill omen? Lucinda wanted to cry out, to nudge her mother. Instead she stayed by Martin's side, pretending to watch the play, card after card, trick after trick. How long would he stand there?

"Matalea!" It came at last, thin, cutting, terrible. Matalea looked up, her pose and her poise utterly gone. Pride, dignity, everything had given way to fright.

"Oh, Pelig—" she began foolishly.

"I don't need to be announced in my own house," he creaked. "I suppose you want to lock me up and feed me through a keyhole."

EVERYBODY sat staring; in the shame and excitement Lucinda had an impression of Lady Garnegal, a look of stupid disdain in her prominent eyes; undoubtedly she was commenting on American manners—and she was a great one to talk, thought Lucinda in that flash; her own husband treated her like a dog. Everybody knew that.

Pelig hobbled forward a few steps; there was something repulsive in his struggle, for he had forgotten his malacca stick. In a sort of respectful embarrassment the men had risen. Matalea too had come to her feet.

"See here," he croaked, pointing a twisted finger at her, "what did I tell you about going out tonight?"

"But, Pelig, dear—" Her voice was beaten, quivering.

"Oh, shut up! So you're hitting the high spots again, are you? You thought you'd locked me up and chloroformed me, did you? Well, by God, you haven't."

"He's terrible," Lucinda thought she had whispered to Martin. He must either have heard or read her thoughts, for his hand clasped hers behind a chair.

"Pelig," said Matalea in a pathetic attempt to make the best of her ruin, "don't you think you ought to be in bed? You're not well—"

"I'm better than you wish I was," he snarled, shaking his long finger and beginning to tremble all over. "If you had your way I'd be in an asylum."

"Can't I help you, Mr. Harbison?" It was Vera who offered this, billowing to her feet.

"You can help me by getting out of my house. You and the whole sneaking pack of you! I didn't ask you here. I didn't ask any of you. Matalea got you here—Matalea and that precious girl of hers. I'll tell you all something—" His false teeth were dropping, saliva was foaming at the corners of his crooked mouth. "They're leeches, the pair of 'em. I'd like to know where they'd be if it wasn't for—"

"Look here!" To Lucinda's amazement Martin, of all that *Mad Hatter's* party, was fighting back.

"Oh. So you want to make a speech, young schoolboy. And who are you, please?"

"I'm—I'm—Martin Cole. And I—"

"Get out of here," Pelig howled. "The whole lot of you make me sick. Shimba!"

"Yes, sair." The Japanese butler, as ashamed as the others, had appeared at his elbow.

"Turn out the lights. The party's over. Get their hats and coats. Throw 'em into the

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hall, if they don't want 'em." Shimba stood vaguely smiling from face to face.

"Do you hear what I said? I don't want these two grafters cluttering my house any more—Oo! Ouch!" Suddenly his face twisted like a monkey's and he laid his hand on the small of his back, beginning to whine: "O-o-ow! It's hitting me again. My back! Matalea!"

Twisting like some wounded monster, he would have fallen had not Shimba, developing an unsuspected strength, caught him and led him away.

"He's quite ill, I'm afraid," explained Matalea idiotically, and with tight-pressed lips she followed. The guests, mumbling false words of sympathy, filtered away toward their wraps. But they were not in time to escape the clamor: "Matalea, you fool, get my shirt off. Rub my back! What did you bring those sponges here for? They've killed me. O-o-o-o! Rub my back!"

Martin was the last to leave. He begged to stay. He might be of service.

"You'll only make it worse, I'm afraid," said Lucinda, and went with him to the door.

"If you want me, call me there," he said, scribbling on a card. Then he left her to that terrible night.

DR. WEINIGER came twice before morning. Colonel Harbison needed more rest, he said—perhaps he had been unduly excited. The Colonel had remarkable stamina and with proper nursing would be himself again in a few weeks. The doctor prescribed morphia and was sure the sleep would do him good. He sent in a night nurse who managed to rouse Pelig out of his comfortably drugged sleep and set him mumbling again. Neither Lucinda nor her mother slept that night. Matalea wandered from room to room, or sat on her husband's bed with all the seeming devotion of a good wife. Lucinda tried to help, tried to read.

Hour after hour, doing nothing, waiting for nothing, Lucinda sat with dry eyes and a cold heart. She could think only of the bad old man, now snoring in his bed, who had denounced her and her mother in the face of established respectability. Grafters—he had called them that. What did people think of them? What shameful sins had they committed that they should be stripped and lashed before a selected audience? And Martin had been there to hear it. He had tried to be sweet. But what would he think of her now? . . . She remembered what Martha Carter had said about marriage. . . . Handcuffs, chains, unhappy animals in a cage. Well, Lucinda had witnessed more than her share of it.

Pelig spent his night between sleeping and waking. When he slept he snored; when he woke he swore. Matalea, sitting by his bed, listened numbly to the oaths, ingenious and horrible, directed at her. "You old harpy," once he mumbled, "you thought you could kill me off. We'll see who'll last the longest." Lucinda, once more listening, came in and tried to pull her mother away, but Matalea shook her head, smiling bitterly, and held to her chair.

The girl had something to fight against that night; an invisible something that had grown and gathered about her during her wandering years. "What have I done," she cried, "that I've had to see so much?" Yet she was only twenty.

IT was nearly four o'clock when her mother called her to her room. Matalea was sitting before her mirror, stiffly upright and still wearing the clothes she had assumed for the disastrous party. But her dress was loosened, her hair straggling. She had folded her hands and was looking straight at her daughter with glazed, unseeing eyes.

"Mother!" cried Lucinda, softly, coming to her. She pressed the disheveled head to her breast and tried to comfort her. But Matalea stiffened and drew away.

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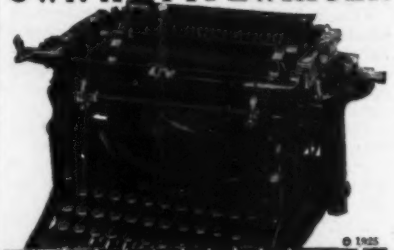
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"Do you know I want to kill him?" she said, and her look was terrible. "When he's lying like that, asleep, it's hard to keep my hands off."

"Mother, dear, he must have been out of his mind." Lucinda sank on her knees beside the defiant woman.

"Out of his mind! He thinks clearer than you or I do. He wants to throw me out, the way he's thrown out his other women. But I won't go. I've given up my youth to marry him. Why doesn't he die? Why doesn't he? The cold, crawling old thing!" She writhed away from his mental image.

"But why don't you leave him, Mother? He's a torment to you. You don't love him. You can't."

"Don't talk nonsense," she replied, a listless shadow of her old self. "Do you think I'm going to throw away all these years? No. He's got to endure me as I'm trying to endure him. Ha!" She laughed wretchedly at some bitter thought, and went on: "I won't give him another chance to make a fool of me in public. I'll put him in an asylum." She considered this dumbly. "But what good would that do? He's smart enough to keep himself out of trouble. The thin-lipped old— But he won't get the upper hand of me. I'll have him watched, I'll get a keeper—"

Suddenly she crumpled and looked so worn and old that her daughter scarcely knew her.

"Maybe he'll stay in bed now and not give you so much bother."

"Stay in bed?" shrieked Matala. "He's strong as a horse. He'll be up tomorrow and ordering me to rub his back. How I hate that skinny back! I could stick a knife in it." Then she surrendered herself to hysterics. "I'm an old woman," she blubbered. "I'm a hag. I look—as old—as he is. What—what can I do with him? What—can—I—do?"

"Let me undress you, honey," ventured Lucinda, uneasily. Then her mother turned on her. Her face wet and savage, her hair like Medusa's, she flamed out:

"I wish you'd let me alone. You're never here when you're wanted. You're useless. Perfectly useless. I've made these sacrifices for you. A lot you care. Do you think I'd ever have looked at that old devil if I hadn't wanted money—for you? And what have you done to help me?"

An unexpected blow, against which the daughter had made no preparation. She tried to answer, but a lifelong training stood in her way. And, after all, what *had* she done to help? . . . Wretchedly she listened to her mother's diatribe.

"What have you done but block me in every way? Where were you this afternoon when I asked you to come home—after humiliating myself before that old devil so that I could give you a chance to meet somebody besides the poor white trash you've picked up? You've made all this trouble for me. You do nothing but make trouble—"

Matala continued her harangue, not seeing that Lucinda had slipped from the room and closed the door behind her.

Chapter Thirty-one

IT was morning and the night was done. Lucinda raised a shade and looked down into the back yards below. In the gulf between two apartment-houses a sloppy woman shuffled along, carrying a bucket; a black tom-cat followed her, his tail raised like a flag-pole. A healthy world, a real world was astir.

Lucinda moved noiselessly about, bathed, arranged her hair, selected her gown. Then from her closet she chose a small handbag, a rather shabby one, which she had used at school, and began packing it with a few of

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her simplest underclothes, her toilet things. All the time impish thoughts were chasing round and round her tired head: "He wants to get rid of Mother and she won't go. They'd kill each other if they dared. They don't care. They just keep on tormenting each other. They're enemies—and what have I ever done to help?"

When the little clock over her mantel tinkled six she decided she could wait no longer, so she crept down the darkened hall. The sick man's malevolence like an unpleasant odor seemed to permeate the place. That night, in a moment's dozing she had dreamed of her mother, young as she used to be, chained to a little ape who mouthed at her and made disgusting gestures. "We're happy, happy, h-a-p-p-y!" the scrawny beast was snarling in Pelig's voice. Even in the early day he seemed to haunt the shadows of the apartment as Lucinda, bag in hand, opened the front door.

Outside, the air was light and the early sun had shot a golden surface across the gray pavements, so that she could not but feel stimulation as she hurried in search of a telephone booth. She had hoped to find one in Fifty-ninth Street, but the drug-stores and tobacconists' shops had not opened for the day. In the middle of the block she saw a porter mopping the steps of a second-class hotel. At the desk she found a switchboard girl who also stared as she took the number and pointed her to a booth. Lucinda had scarcely taken down the receiver when she heard Martin's voice calling to her.

"I didn't think I'd get you so soon," she began, suddenly bashful with the portent of her errand.

"Oh, I've been sticking around the telephone," he announced easily. "Nobody in this barrack would ever call me."

"Martin! You haven't been sitting up all night—"

"I had a lot of reading to do anyhow; it's just as comfortable down here as anywhere. How's—how's everything?"

"Pretty bad, Martin. That's why I wanted to talk to you. Can you see me right away?"

"Of course I can. But what's happened, Cinders?"

"I can't tell you now."

"Where are you?"

"In a hotel in Fifty-ninth Street."

"Cinders! What has happened?"

"I must talk to you right away," she said numbly.

"Let me see—" He paused to consider. "Let's have breakfast somewhere. There's a Childs' restaurant in Columbus Circle. Can you meet me there? I'll come right down."

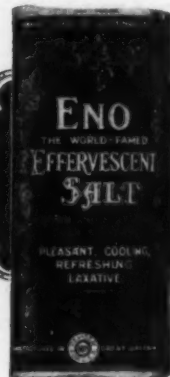
When she went to the corner and waited for a cross-town car, she was trembling as though the spring morning had turned suddenly cold.

"It isn't just last night," she said when she had revived herself with coffee and scrambled eggs; she had told him the story of Pelig and her mother and those who had gone before. "It has been every night, every day since I can remember. If it hasn't been one man it's been another. Pelig's only giving her back the hell she gave poor Daddy. How can I say that? But it's so. What she did to Mr. Weaver—my father—I don't know. Maybe it was nip and tuck. But it's been hate, hate, hate ever since I was born."

"You mustn't stand it any longer," decided Martin.

"I'll never stay under her roof or his again," she said. "That's why I'm here." Then with a rush of emotion in which all the slippery white surfaces of Childs'—tiled walls, tiled floors, tiled tables, brittle china-ware—seemed clustered together in a confused puzzle, she spoke her mind and asked: "Martin, will you take me now?"

"Yes, dear," he said, "this very morning."



Thanks-Giving

Thanksgiving—giving thanks for blessings tangible and intangible, the most precious of which is good health.

Like so many things worth while, observance of the laws of life reward those who obey and punish offenders. Nature, too, has certain inexorable laws. Not the least of these is inner cleanliness.

To promote the blessings of health, to abide by the laws of life, many people have come to the regular use of Eno.

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Then she remembered his work; he hadn't graduated. And how about Dr. Milling and the South Seas?

"Oh, bull!" was his answer to all her argument. "Milling's done me dirt. He's frozen in somewhere. And graduation—what's that? I've got all my points. I've passed my finals. Nothing to do, practically, but walk up and snatch my diploma. All this commencement business is a drizzling bore. If I'm not there for my diploma, I can send around a messenger boy. Now that's settled. What we're going to do now is get married. We'll take the subway down to the City Hall, and when it's open—"

"No, Martin." Her eyes had grown piteously wise with fear and earnestness.

"But, Lucinda," he objected, "you can't just wander around, waiting for me to graduate."

"It isn't that I meant." She looked down at her plate. "I want you to go with me right away—if you can. It's what you said about—about getting married—"

"But I don't see any other way." His manner unnerved her. She had been afraid he might take it like that.

"There is another way," she murmured at last. "Last night I promised to marry you, Martin. That was what you wanted—and you made me want it too. I've always hated it, Martin. You just made me think I wanted it. But after last night—you saw some of it. That's what marriage is."

"Ours wouldn't be like that," he argued into a deaf ear. "Your mother's is a very special case. There must be millions of happy ones."

"I've never seen any of them," she returned bitterly.

"I think there's a lot of bunk in it, just the way you do, Cinders." He was leaning over her, his look intensely earnest. "But what difference would it make if we went to the City Hall and signed a paper? It would respectabilize us, that's all. Just make things easier."

"No," she shook her head stubbornly. "It would make things harder. We'd be tied."

"BUT, honey!" He had taken on the tone which kind men use with unreasonable women. "When two people are in love to last, the way we are, won't it make it all the lovelier to be tied, to think that we're in harness, pulling together all the time?"

"No," she insisted. Then in a sudden burst of passion: "Martin, I've seen so much of it, so much of it."

"Poor dear!" He put both his hands over hers. "They haven't been fair to you."

"You'll love me always, always, won't you, Martin?" she asked in despair, feeling that he too had failed to understand.

"You know I will," he mumbled.

"Because that's the one thing I've got to have. Everybody seems to be thinking only about himself. I'm selfish too. But, Martin, I didn't begin living until I saw you. You don't know what it means to me, just to be loved by you. And that's the one thing I can't,"—she paused dumbly for a word, then said,—"can't spoil."

"We're not going to spoil anything, sweet," she heard him say, but his face was dimmed before her eyes.

"We are," she whispered, "if we get married."

"But what are we going to do? Not just run away together?"

She nodded, too overcome with shyness to give an audible answer.

"Do you know what that means, Cinders?" he asked. "We'd be living around from pillar to post, afraid of every peddler that came to our door. We wouldn't quite respect each other—"

"Married people don't respect each other," she broke in. "None of my fathers ever respected my mother. They just seemed to stop loving, that's all."

Every woman's delicate problem of feminine health and daintiness



TWO sisters met, after five years separation. One was a modest little house-wife from a small eastern town; the other led a brilliant club and social existence as the charming wife of a lawyer in the west.

The latter, from the experience of active years and social prestige, observed her more retiring and conservative sister. She found her losing the vitality, grip and charm she had formerly possessed. Finally she spoke frankly.

WOMEN do not always know how much of their physical tone and ultimate feminine daintiness depend upon keeping the entire body in a condition of utmost health and cleanliness.

We will pass over the more serious question of the prevention of disease—a matter which statistics tell us is of vital concern to many thousands of women every year. It still leaves the problem of the many petty disabilities directly traceable to neglect of a condition that all too soon becomes chronic.

Nervousness, fatigue and weakness quickly result in loss of tone in a woman. This is followed by a feeling of lowered vitality. It is accompanied by a loss of feminine immaculacy and daintiness which threatens her poise and happiness in social life.

Antiseptic cleanliness prevents this loss of tone and daintiness

THE first requisite for combating this loss of tone and daintiness is antiseptic cleanliness. "Most feminine illnesses," says a prominent New York physician and gynecologist, "are the result of bacterial infection, and can be prevented."

Physicians and health authorities now advocate the regular practice of feminine hygiene for keeping the body in a wholesome state of fitness and immaculacy.

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It is recommended because of its utmost purity and its strict dependability. "Lysol" is three times as strong as carbolic acid, yet in proper solution it is actually soothing and lubricating. It is less irritating than the finest toilet soap. It provides you with complete antiseptics, yet it is so carefully blended that it is safe for the most delicate membranes.

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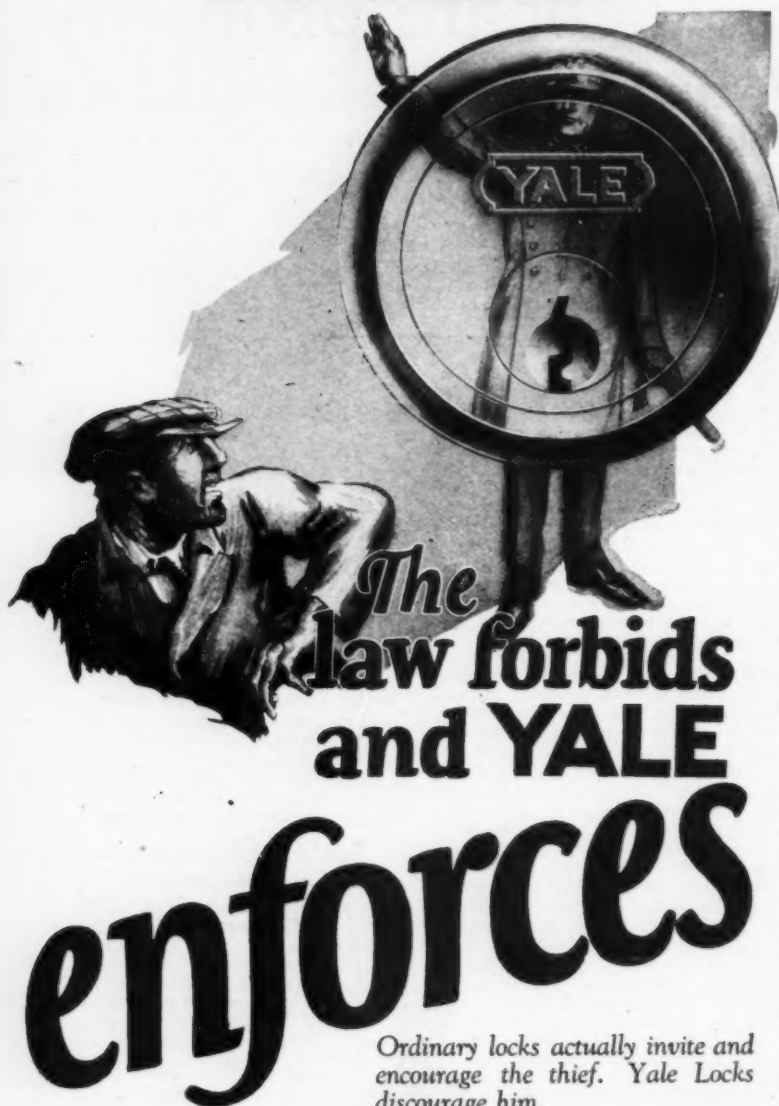
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"Do you think we'd be like that?"
"I don't think so, but *I don't know*. I've got to have love, Martin. But you've changed me so, you've changed me so. Nothing in the world seems wicked to me except killing love and tearing it to pieces and laughing at it."

TEARS she had been fighting back had their way, flooded down her cheeks. But they had not weakened her will.

"Cinders!" he begged. "I know what a hell they've made of your life. But it'll all be different when we're together."

She groped across her plate, just to thank him, and this encouraged him to ask:

"Don't you love me enough to marry me and try?"

"I love you too much," she burst out. "I'd sooner we died. I'd do anything for you, dear, and suffer anything. That's—that's why I wanted to tell you—I want you to be good to me because you love me, not because you're married to me and have got to be. I love you so, dear—I want you to be free—always free—"

She let her tears come shamelessly, in view of several early breakfasters and a shock-haired waitress who smiled wisely, viewing another Broadway tragedy.

"Suppose we did do this," Martin was saying thickly. "Suppose there were children. What then?"

She calmed herself and attempted to dry her eyes. Why had she made such a mess of it? Why wouldn't he understand?

"We'd marry then, if we had to," she decided, and again was crushed. "The word 'marry' means something awful to me. It isn't love. It isn't anything. Love—love is beautiful. And marriage—it's hideous, Martin."

They both stiffened into silence. The shock-haired waitress came around, punched a ticket, and slid it across the porcelain table. Lucinda sat erect, at loss for anything more to say. She had made her break for freedom, and it had failed.

"Cinders," said Martin at last, clearing his throat, "what is it you want to do?"

"I don't know," she replied clearly. "But if you feel like that, I must go somewhere. I can take care of myself. But we mustn't see each other any more." She had shuffled in her chair and reached out for her little bag.

"Cinders!" He clutched out eagerly to stop her, half arose, forced her back roughly. "Do you think it makes any difference how we live, so long as we're together? Do you think I give a tinker's dam for anything but you?"

"You really mean that, Martin?" The assurance gave her joy, and behind it a smothered sense of guilt.

If she had looked at him doubtfully for a moment her suspicions melted before the warmth of his eyes; the light they gave back was answer enough for her.

"You mustn't worry, dear, about the consequences," she smiled, glowing again, seeing magic in the future. "If we're right, what do we care what people think and say?" And all that time her practical mind, like an industrious secretary, was thumbing over her Book of Expedients—Jerry Malone—Saug Point—

She had laid her hand on his arm. His face was kindling with enthusiasm.

"We'll go today," he said.

"Trust God and follow me," she replied. She spoke lightly, almost flippantly. But there was high purpose in her lifted chin and in her starry eyes.

In the next installment comes one of the most dramatic climaxes in modern American literature. Do not fail to read it in the forthcoming December issue of The Red Book Magazine.

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Game fish abound in these nearby waters and wild fowl are plentiful in season. Sandy beaches and a rolling surf bring joy to the heart of the bather. In summer cool breezes sweep in from the sea, while winter days are made balmy by the genial

Gulf Stream. (Such is the setting of Indrio, destined to become America's most beautiful home town. Here midst the splendor of Florida sky and verdure, is being planned a residential community to charm the most critical eye.

A Masterpiece of Civic Planning

Indrio is the vision of men of large affairs, who command the financial resources and artistic genius necessary to insure its realization. Famous architects and landscape gardeners have been retained to make Indrio a civic masterpiece.

Already parks, plazas and boulevards are being laid out with an unrestrained hand. These latter range from 100 to 200 feet in width, and will be generously planted with huge fronded palms.

Architectural unity will be assured by the adoption of the appropriate Mediterranean type of architecture as standard. No resi-

dence lot will be less than 100 feet wide.

Indrio's proposed improvements include a million dollar hotel, bathing casino, pleasure and boat piers, yacht harbor, tennis and roque courts, bridle paths, and an 18-hole golf course.

To you who have tired of the ugliness and climatic discomforts of northern cities, Indrio will be a haven indeed. Here you can live amid beautiful surroundings in a climate unsurpassed in all the world.

An elaborately illustrated folder describing Indrio will gladly be sent on request.



PHELPS-HENDRICKSON COMPANY

Exclusive Selling Agents for EAST COAST DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
JOHN I. BEGGS, President

Box N30, INDRIO, Florida

PHELPS-HENDRICKSON CO.
Box N 30, Indrio, Florida

Gentlemen: Please send me your illustrated folder describing Indrio.

Name.....

Address.....

The proposed hotel, with an 18-hole golf course in the background

The Oval Basin, Indrio's proposed salt water bathing casino

A suggested Indrio home of Mediterranean architecture

A suggested apartment building between the business and residential sections

One of the numerous planned streets which will add to the beauty of Indrio

Suggested treatment of a business street in Indrio

The proposed Indrio station of the Florida East Coast Railway



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